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The Travels of Sir John Mandeville

The version of the Cotton Manuscript
in modern spelling

With three narratives, in illustration of it,
from Hakluyt's "*Navigations, Voyages & Discoveries*"

London
Macmillan and Co. Limited
New York: The Macmillan Company
1900

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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE p. v

THE Travels of Sir John Mandeville were edited anonymously in 1725, in the version for which a 'Cotton' manuscript in the British Museum is our only extant authority. From 1499, when they were first printed by Wynkyn de Worde, the *Travels* had enjoyed great popularity in England, as in the rest of Europe; but the printed editions before 1725 had all followed an inferior translation (with an unperceived gap in the middle of it), which had already gained the upper hand before printing was invented. Another manuscript in the British Museum, belonging to the 'Egerton' collection, preserves yet a third version, and this was printed for the first time by Mr. G. F. Warner, for the Roxburghe Club, in 1889, together with the original French text, and an introduction, and notes, which it would be difficult to over-praise. In editing the Egerton version, Mr. Warner made constant reference to the Cotton manuscript, which he quoted in many of his critical notes. But with this exception, no one appears to have looked at the manuscript since it was first printed, and subsequent writers have been content to take the correctness of the 1725 text for granted, priding themselves, apparently, on the care with which they reproduced all the superfluous eighteenth century capitals with which every line is dotted. Unluckily, the introduction of needless capitals was the least of the original editor's crimes, for he omits words and phrases, and sometimes (a common trick with p. vi careless copyists) a whole sentence or clause which happens to end with the same word as its predecessor. He was also a deliberate as well as a careless criminal, for the paragraph about the Arabic alphabet at the end of Chapter XV. being difficult to reproduce, he omitted it altogether, and not only this, but the last sentence of Chapter XVI. as well, because it contained a reference to it.

That it has been left to the editor (who has hitherto rather avoided that name) of a series of popular reprints to restore whole phrases and sentences to the text of a famous book is not very creditable to English scholarship, and amounts, indeed, to a personal grievance; for to produce an easily readable text of an old book without a good critical edition to work on must always be difficult, while in the case of a work with the peculiar reputation of 'Mandeville' the difficulty is greatly increased. Had a critical edition existed, it would have been permissible for a popular text to botch the few sentences in which the tail does not agree with the beginning, and to correct obvious mistranslation without special note. But 'Mandeville' has an old reputation as the 'Father of English Prose,' and when no trustworthy text is available, even a popular editor must be careful lest he bear false witness. The Cotton version is, therefore, here reproduced, 'warts and all,' save in less than a dozen instances, where a dagger indicates that, to avoid printing nonsense, an obvious flaw has been corrected either from the 'Egerton' manuscript or the French text. When a word still survives, the modern form is adopted: thus 'Armenia' and 'soldiers' are here printed instead of 'Ermony' and 'soudiours.' But a new word is never substituted for an old one, and the reader who is unfamiliar with obsolete words, p. vii such as 'Almayne' (Germany) or 'dere' (harm),—there are surprisingly few for a book written five centuries ago,—must consult the unpretentious glossary. Of previous editions, that of 1725 and the reprints of it, including those of Halliwell-Phillipps, profess, though they do not do so, to reproduce the manuscript exactly. Thomas Wright's edition is really a translation, and that issued in 1895 by Mr. Arthur Layard often comes near to being one, though the artist-editor has shown far more feeling for the old text than his too whimsical illustrations might lead one to expect. It is hoped that the plan here adopted preserves as much as possible of the fourteenth century flavour, with the minimum of disturbance to the modern reader's enjoyment.

The plan of this series forbids the introduction of critical disquisitions, and I am thus absolved from attempting any theory as to how the tangled web of the authorship of the book should be unravelled. The simple faith of our childhood in a Sir John Mandeville, really born at St. Albans, who travelled, and told in an English book what he saw and heard, is shattered to pieces. We now know that our Mandeville is a compilation, as clever and artistic as Malory's 'Morte d'Arthur,' from the works of earlier writers, with few, if any, touches added from personal experience; that it was written in

French, and rendered into Latin before it attracted the notice of a series of English translators (whose own accounts of the work they were translating are not to be trusted), and that the name Sir John Mandeville was a *nom de guerre* borrowed from a real knight of this name who lived in the reign of Edward II. Beyond this it is difficult to unravel the knot, despite the ends which lie temptingly p. viii
loose. A Liège chronicler, Jean d'Outremeuse, tells a story of a certain Jean de Bourgogne revealing on his deathbed that his real name was Sir John Mandeville; and in accordance with this story there is authentic record of a funeral inscription to a Sir John Mandeville in a church at Liège. Jean de Bourgogne had written other books and had been in England, which he had left in 1322 (the year in which "Mandeville" began his travels), being then implicated in killing a nobleman, just, as the real Sir John Mandeville had been implicated ten years before in the death of the Earl of Cornwall. We think for a moment that we have an explanation of the whole mystery in imagining that Jean de Bourgogne (he was also called Jean à la Barbe, Joannes Barbatus) had chosen to father his compilation on Mandeville, and eventually merged his own identity in that of his pseudonym. But Jean d'Outremeuse, the recipient of his deathbed confidence, is a tricky witness, who may have had a hand in the authorship himself, and there is no clear story as yet forthcoming. But the book remains, and is none the less delightful for the mystery which attaches to it, and little less important in the history of English literature as a translation than as an original work. For though a translation it stands as the first, or almost the first, attempt to bring secular subjects within the domain of English prose, and that is enough to make it mark an epoch.

Mandeville is here reprinted rather as a source of literary pleasure than as a medieval contribution to geography, and it is therefore no part of our duty to follow Mr. Warner in tracking out the authorities to whom the compiler had recourse in successive chapters. But as there was some space in this volume to spare, and a very pleasant method of filling it suggested itself, a threefold supplement is p. ix
here printed, [0] which may be of some use even to serious students, and is certainly very good literature. When Richard Hakluyt, at the end of the sixteenth century, was compiling his admirable work, 'The Principall Navigations, Voiages, and Discoveries of the English Nation, made by sea or over land, within the compasse of these 1500 yeeres,' he boldly overstepped the limits set forth on his title-page, and printed in the original Latin, with translations into good Elizabethan English, the narratives of three of the earlier travellers, all of them foreigners, from whom the compiler of Mandeville had drawn most freely. "And because," he tells us, "these north-eastern regions beyond Volga, by reason of the huge deserts, the cold climate, and the barbarous incivilitie of the people there inhabiting, were never yet thoroughly travelled by any of our Nation, nor sufficiently known unto us; I have here annexed unto the said Englishman's [ix] traveils the rare and memorable journals of two friers who were some of the first Christians that travailed farthest that way, and brought home most particular intelligence of all things which they had seen." These two friars were John de Plano Carpini, sent on an embassy to the great Chan by Pope Innocent IV. in 1246, and William de Rubruquis, who travelled in the interests of Louis IX. of France in 1253. In the same way in his Second Part, Hakluyt adds 'The Voyage of Frier Beatus Odoricus to Asia Minor, Armenia, Chaldaea, Persia, India, China, and other remote parts,' Odoric being a Franciscan of Pordenone in North Italy, who dictated an account of his travels in 1330. Anyone who compares these three narratives (more p. x
particularly Odoric's) with Mandeville's Travels will see how the compiler used his materials, and they have also very considerable interest of their own.

As this volume of the Library of English Classics has brought with it an unusual editorial responsibility, I may be permitted an editor's privilege in making two acknowledgments. The first, to my friend Mr. G. F. Warner, my readers must share with me, for without the help of his splendid edition of the 'Egerton' version and the French text, the popular 'Mandeville' could not have been attempted. My second acknowledgment is of a more personal nature. Roxburghe Club books are never easy to obtain, and the few copies of the Mandeville allowed to be sold were priced at £20 each. In noticing Mr. Warner's edition in the 'Academy' (from a borrowed copy), I remarked rather ruefully that the gratitude which students of moderate means could feel towards the Club for printing so valuable a work was somewhat tempered by this little matter of the price. I was then helping Mr. Charles Elton with the catalogue of his library, and on reading my review, he wrote me a pretty letter to say that by the rules of the Club he was the possessor of a second copy, and that he thought I was the best person to give it to. Students who have to think a good many times before they spend £20 on a book do not often receive such a present from wealthy book-lovers; and at the risk of obtruding more of my own concerns than my rough-and-ready editing entitles me to do, I cannot send out this

‘Mandeville,’ within a few weeks of Mr. Elton’s too early death, without telling this little story of his kindness.

A. W. Pollard.

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THE PROLOGUE

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For as much as the land beyond the sea, that is to say the Holy Land, that men call the Land of Promission or of Behest, passing all other lands, is the most worthy land, most excellent, and lady and sovereign of all other lands, and is blessed and hallowed of the precious body and blood of our Lord Jesu Christ; in the which land it liked him to take flesh and blood of the Virgin Mary, to environ that holy land with his blessed feet; and there he would of his blessedness enombre him in the said blessed and glorious Virgin Mary, and become man, and work many miracles, and preach and teach the faith and the law of Christian men unto his children; and there it liked him to suffer many reprovings and scorns for us; and he that was king of heaven, of air, of earth, of sea and of all things

that be contained in them, would all only be clept king of that land, when he said, *Rex sum Judeorum*, that is to say, 'I am King of Jews'; and that land he chose before all other lands, as the best and most worthy land, and the most virtuous land of all the world: for it is the heart and the midst of all the world, witnessing the philosopher, that saith thus, *Virtus rerum in medio consistit*, that is to say, 'The virtue of things is in the midst'; and in that land he would lead his life, and suffer passion and death of Jews, for us, to buy and to deliver us from pains of hell, and from death without end; the which p. 4
was ordained for us, for the sin of our forme-father Adam, and for our own sins also; for as for himself, he had no evil deserved: for he thought never evil ne did evil: and he that was king of glory and of joy, might best in that place suffer death; because he chose in that land rather than in any other, there to suffer his passion and his death. For he that will publish anything to make it openly known, he will make it to be cried and pronounced in the middle place of a town; so that the thing that is proclaimed and pronounced, may evenly stretch to all parts: right so, he that was former of all the world, would suffer for us at Jerusalem, that is the midst of the world; to that end and intent, that his passion and his death, that was published there, might be known evenly to all parts of the world.

See now, how dear he bought man, that he made after his own image, and how dear he again-bought us, for the great love that he had to us, and we never deserved it to him. For more precious chattel ne greater ransom ne might he put for us, than his blessed body, his precious blood, and his holy life, that he thralled for us; and all he offered for us that never did sin.

Ah dear God! What love had he to us his subjects, when he that never trespassed, would for trespassers suffer death! Right well ought us for to love and worship, to dread and serve such a Lord; and to worship and praise such an holy land, that brought forth such fruit, through the which every man is saved, but it be his own default. Well may that land be called delectable and a fructuous land, that was be-bled and moisted with the precious blood of our Lord Jesu Christ; the which is the same land that our Lord behight us in heritage. And in that land he would die, as seised, to leave it to us, his children.

Wherefore every good Christian man, that is of power, and hath whereof, should pain him with all his strength for to conquer our right heritage, and chase out all the misbelieving men. For we be clept Christian men, after Christ our Father. And if we be right children of Christ, we ought for to p. 5
challenge the heritage, that our Father left us, and do it out of heathen men's hands. But now pride, covetise, and envy have so inflamed the hearts of lords of the world, that they are more busy for to dis-herit their neighbours, more than for to challenge or to conquer their right heritage before-said. And the common people, that would put their bodies and their chattels, to conquer our heritage, they may not do it without the lords. For a sembly of people without a chieftain, or a chief lord, is as a flock of sheep without a shepherd; the which departeth and disperpleth and wit never whither to go. But would God, that the temporal lords and all worldly lords were at good accord, and with the common people would take this holy voyage over the sea! Then I trow well, that within a little time, our right heritage before-said should be reconciled and put in the hands of the right heirs of Jesu Christ.

And, for as much as it is long time passed, that there was no general passage ne voyage over the sea; and many men desire for to hear speak of the Holy Land, and have thereof great solace and comfort; I, John Mandeville, Knight, albeit I be not worthy, that was born in England, in the town of St. Albans, and passed the sea in the year of our Lord Jesu Christ, 1322, in the day of St. Michael; and hitherto been long time over the sea, and have seen and gone through many diverse lands, and many provinces and kingdoms and isles and have passed throughout Turkey, Armenia the little and the great; through Tartary, Persia, Syria, Arabia, Egypt the high and the low; through Lybia, Chaldea, and a great part of Ethiopia; through Amazonia, Ind the less and the more, a great part; and throughout many other Isles, that be about Ind; where dwell many diverse folks, and of diverse manners and laws, and of diverse shapes of men. Of which lands and isles I shall speak more plainly hereafter; and I shall devise you of some part of things that there be, when time shall be, after it may best come to my mind; and specially for them, that will and are in purpose for to visit the Holy City of Jerusalem and the holy places that are thereabout. And I shall tell the way that they shall hold p. 6
thither. For I have often times passed and ridden that way, with good company of many lords. God be thanked!

And ye shall understand, that I have put this book out of Latin into French, and translated it again out of French into English, that every man of my nation may understand it. But lords and knights and

other noble and worthy men that con Latin but little, and have been beyond the sea, know and understand, if I say truth or no, and if I err in devising, for forgetting or else, that they may redress it and amend it. For things passed out of long time from a man's mind or from his sight, turn soon into forgetting; because that mind of man ne may not be comprehended ne withholden, for the frailty of mankind.

CHAPTER I

To teach you the Way out of England to Constantinople

In the name of God, Glorious and Almighty!

He that will pass over the sea and come to land [to go to the city of Jerusalem, he may wend many ways, both on sea and land], after the country that he cometh from; [for] many of them come to one end. But troweth not that I will tell you all the towns, and cities and castles that men shall go by; for then should I make too long a tale; but all only some countries and most principal steads that men shall go through to go the right way.

First, if a man come from the west side of the world, as England, Ireland, Wales, Scotland, or Norway, he may, if that he will, go through Almayne and through the kingdom of Hungary, that marcheth to the land of Polayne, and to the land of Pannonia, and so to Silesia.

And the King of Hungary is a great lord and a mighty, and holdeth great lordships and much land in his hand. For he holdeth the kingdom of Hungary, Sclavonia, and of Comania a great part, and of p. 7
Bulgaria that men call the land of Bougiers, and of the realm of Russia a great part, whereof he hath made a duchy, that lasteth unto the land of Nyfland, and marcheth to Prussia. And men go through the land of this lord, through a city that is clept Cypron, and by the castle of Neasburghe, and by the evil town, that sit toward the end of Hungary. And there pass men the river of Danube. This river of Danube is a full great river, and it goeth into Almayne, under the hills of Lombardy, and it receiveth into him forty other rivers, and it runneth through Hungary and through Greece and through Thrace, and it entereth into the sea, toward the east so rudely and so sharply, that the water of the sea is fresh and holdeth his sweetness twenty mile within the sea.

And after, go men to Belgrade, and enter into the land of Bougiers; and there pass men a bridge of stone that is upon the river of Marrok. And men pass through the land of Pyncemartz and come to Greece to the city of Nye, and to the city of Fynepape, and after to the city of Dandrenoble, and after to Constantinople, that was wont to be clept Bezanzon. And there dwelleth commonly the Emperor of Greece. And there is the most fair church and the most noble of all the world; and it is of Saint Sophie. And before that church is the image of Justinian the emperor, covered with gold, and he sitteth upon an horse y-crowned. And he was wont to hold a round apple of gold in his hand: but it is fallen out thereof. And men say there, that it is a token that the emperor hath lost a great part of his lands and of his lordships; for he was wont to be Emperor of Roumania and of Greece, of all Asia the less, and of the land of Syria, of the land of Judea in the which is Jerusalem, and of the land of Egypt, of Persia, and of Arabia. But he hath lost all but Greece; and that land he holds all only. And men would many times put the apple into the image's hand again, but it will not hold it. This apple betokeneth the lordship that he had over all the world, that is round. And the tother hand he lifteth up p. 8
against the East, in token to menace the misdoers. This image stands upon a pillar of marble at Constantinople.

CHAPTER II

Of the Cross and the Crown of our Lord Jesu Christ

At Constantinople is the cross of our Lord Jesu Christ, and his coat without seams, that is clept *Tunica inconsutilis*, and the sponge, and the reed, of the which the Jews gave our Lord eysell and gall, in the cross. And there is one of the nails, that Christ was nailed with on the cross.

And some men trow that half the cross, that Christ was done on, be in Cyprus, in an abbey of monks, that men call the Hill of the Holy Cross; but it is not so. For that cross that is in Cyprus, is the cross, in the which Dismas the good thief was hanged on. But all men know not that; and that is evil y-done. For for profit of the offering, they say that it is the cross of our Lord Jesu Christ.

And ye shall understand that the cross of our Lord was made of four manner of trees, as it is contained in this verse,—*In cruce fit palma*, *cedrus*, *cypressus*, *oliva*. For that piece that went upright from the earth to the head was of cypress; and the piece that went overthwart, to the which his hands were nailed, was of palm; and the stock, that stood within the earth, in the which was made the mortise, was of cedar; and the table above his head, that was a foot and an half long, on the which the title was written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, that was of olive.

And the Jews made the cross of these four manner of trees; for they trowed that our Lord Jesu Christ should have hanged on the cross, as long as the cross might last. And therefore made they the foot of the cross of cedar; for cedar may not, in earth nor water, rot, and therefore they would that it should have lasted long. For they trowed that the body of Christ should have stunken, they made that piece, p. 9
that went from the earth upwards of cypress, for it is well-smelling, so that the smell of his body should not grieve men that went forby. And the overthwart piece was of palm, for in the Old Testament it was ordained, that when one was overcome he should be crowned with palm; and for they trowed that they had the victory of Christ Jesus, therefore made they the overthwart piece of palm. And the table of the title they made of olive; for olive betokeneth peace, as the story of Noe witnesseth; when that the culver brought the branch of olive, that betokened peace made between God and man. And so trowed the Jews for to have peace, when Christ was dead; for they said that he made discord and strife amongst them. And ye shall understand that our Lord was y-nailed on the cross lying, and therefore he suffered the more pain.

And the Christian men, that dwell beyond the sea, in Greece, say that the tree of the cross, that we call cypress, was of that tree that Adam ate the apple off; and that find they written. And they say also, that their scripture saith, that Adam was sick, and said to his son Seth, that he should go to the angel that kept Paradise, that he would send him oil of mercy, for to anoint with his members, that he might have health. And Seth went. But the angel would not let him come in; but said to him, that he might not have of the oil of mercy. But he took him three grains of the same tree, that his father ate the apple off; and bade him, as soon as his father was dead, that he should put these three grains under his tongue, and grave him so: and so he did. And of these three grains sprang a tree, as the angel said that it should, and bare a fruit, through the which fruit Adam should be saved. And when Seth came again, he found his father near dead. And when he was dead, he did with the grains as the angel bade him; of the which sprung three trees, of the which the cross was made, that bare good fruit and blessed, our Lord Jesu Christ; through whom, Adam and all that come of him, should be saved and delivered from dread of death without end, but it be their own default.

This holy cross had the Jews hid in the earth, under a rock of the mount of Calvary; and it lay there p. 10
two hundred year and more, into the time that St. Helen, that was mother to Constantine the Emperor of Rome. And she was daughter of King Coel, born in Colchester, that was King of England, that was clept then Britain the more; the which the Emperor Constance wedded to his wife, for her beauty, and gat upon her Constantine, that was after Emperor of Rome, and King of England.

And ye shall understand, that the cross of our Lord was eight cubits long, and the overthwart piece was of length three cubits and a half. And one part of the crown of our Lord, wherewith he was crowned, and one of the nails, and the spear head, and many other relics be in France, in the king's chapel. And the crown lieth in a vessel of crystal richly dight. For a king of France bought these relics some time of the Jews, to whom the emperor had laid them in wed for a great sum of silver.

And if all it be so, that men say, that this crown is of thorns, ye shall understand, that it was of jonkes of the sea, that is to say, rushes of the sea, that prick as sharply as thorns. For I have seen and beholden many times that of Paris and that of Constantinople; for they were both one, made of rushes of the sea. But men have departed them in two parts: of the which, one part is at Paris, and the other part is at Constantinople. And I have one of those precious thorns, that seemeth like a white thorn;

and that was given to me for great specially. For there are many of them broken and fallen into the vessel that the crown lieth in; for they break for dryness when men move them to show them to great lords that come thither.

And ye shall understand, that our Lord Jesu, in that night that he was taken, he was led into a garden; and there he was first examined right sharply; and there the Jews scorned him, and made him a crown of the branches of albespine, that is white thorn, that grew in that same garden, and set it on his head, so fast and so sore, that the blood ran down by many places of his visage, and of his neck, and of his shoulders. And therefore hath the white thorn many virtues, for he that beareth a branch on him thereof, no thunder ne no manner of tempest may dere him; nor in the house, that it is in, may no evil ghost enter nor come unto the place that it is in. And in that same garden, Saint Peter denied our Lord thrice. p. 11

Afterward was our Lord led forth before the bishops and the masters of the law, into another garden of Annas; and there also he was examined, reproved, and scorned, and crowned eft with a sweet thorn, that men clepeth barbarines, that grew in that garden, and that hath also many virtues.

And afterward he was led into a garden of Caiphas, and there he was crowned with eglantine.

And after he was led into the chamber of Pilate, and there he was examined and crowned. And the Jews set him in a chair, and clad him in a mantle; and there made they the crown of jonkes of the sea; and there they kneeled to him, and scorned him, saying, *Ave*, *Rex Judeorum*! that is to say, 'Hail, King of Jews!' And of this crown, half is at Paris, and the other half at Constantinople. And this crown had Christ on his head, when he was done upon the cross; and therefore ought men to worship it and hold it more worthy than any of the others.

And the spear shaft hath the Emperor of Almayne; but the head is at Paris. And natheles the Emperor of Constantinople saith that he hath the spear head; and I have often time seen it, but it is greater than that at Paris.

CHAPTER III

Of the City of Constantinople, and of the Faith of Greeks

At Constantinople lieth Saint Anne, our Lady's mother, whom Saint Helen let bring from Jerusalem. And there lieth also the body of John Chrisostome, that was Archbishop of Constantinople. And there lieth also Saint Luke the Evangelist: for his bones were brought from Bethany, where he was buried. And many other relics be there. And there is the vessel of stone, as it were of marble, that men clepe enydros, that evermore droppeth water, and filleth himself every year, till that it go over above, without that that men take from within. p. 12

Constantinople is a full fair city, and a good, and well walled; and it is three-cornered. And there is an arm of the sea Hellespont: and some men call it the Mouth of Constantinople; and some men call it the Brace of Saint George: and that arm closeth the two parts of the city. And upward to the sea, upon the water, was wont to be the great city of Troy, in a full fair plain: but that city was destroyed by them of Greece, and little appeareth thereof, because it is so long sith it was destroyed.

About Greece there be many isles, as Calliste, Calcas, Oertige, Tesbria, Mynia, Flaxon, Melo, Carpate, and Lemnos. And in this isle is the mount Athos, that passeth the clouds. And there be many diverse languages and many countries, that be obedient to the emperor; that is to say, Turcople, Pyncynard, Comange, and many other, as Thrace and Macedonia, of the which Alexander was king. In this country was Aristotle born, in a city that men clepe Stagyra, a little from the city of Thrace. And at Stagyra lieth Aristotle; and there is an altar upon his tomb. And there make men great feasts for him every year, as though he were a saint. And at his altar they holden their great councils and their assemblies, and they hope, that through inspiration of God and of him, they shall have the better council.

In this country be right high hills, toward the end of Macedonia. And there is a great hill, that men clepe Olympus, that departeth Macedonia and Thrace. And it is so high, that it passeth the clouds. And there is another hill, that is clept Athos, that is so high, that the shadow of him reacheth to Lemne, that is an isle; and it is seventy-six mile between. And above at the cop of the hill is the air so clear, that men may find no wind there, and therefore may no beast live there, so is the air dry. p. 13

And men say in these countries, that philosophers some time went upon these hills, and held to their nose a sponge moisted with water, for to have air; for the air above was so dry. And above, in the dust and in the powder of those hills, they wrote letters and figures with their fingers. And at the year's end they came again, and found the same letters and figures, the which they had written the year before, without any default. And therefore it seemeth well, that these hills pass the clouds and join to the pure air.

At Constantinople is the palace of the emperor, right fair and well-dight: and therein is a fair place for joustings, or for other plays and desports. And it is made with stages, and hath degrees about, that every man may well see, and none grieve other. And under these stages be stables well vaulted for the emperor's horses; and all the pillars be of marble.

And within the Church of Saint Sophia, an emperor sometime would have buried the body of his father, when he was dead. And, as they made the grave, they found a body in the earth, and upon the body lay a fine plate of gold; and thereon was written, in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, letters that said thus; *Jesu Christus nascetur de Virgine Maria*, *et ego credo in eum*; that is to say, 'Jesu Christ shall be born of the Virgin Mary, and I trow in him.' And the date when it was laid in the earth, was two thousand year before our Lord was born. And yet is the plate of gold in the treasury of the church. And men say, that it was Hermogenes the wise man.

And if all it so be, that men of Greece be Christian yet they vary from our faith. For they say, that the Holy Ghost may not come of the Son; but all only of the Father. And they are not obedient to the Church of Rome, ne to the Pope. And they say that their Patriarch hath as much power over the sea, as the Pope hath on this side the sea. And therefore Pope John xxii. sent letters to them, how Christian faith should be all one; and that they should be obedient to the Pope, that is God's Vicar on earth, to whom God gave his plein power for to bind and to assoil, and therefore they should be obedient to him. p. 14

And they sent again diverse answers; and among others they said thus: *Potentiam tuam summam circa tuos subjectos*, *firmiter credimus*. *Superbiam tuam summam tolerare non possumus*. *Avaritiam tuam summam satiare non intendimus*. *Dominus tecum*; *quia Dominus nobiscum est*. That is to say: 'We trow well, that thy power is great upon thy subjects. We may not suffer thine high pride. We be not in purpose to fulfil thy great covetise. Lord be with thee; for our Lord is with us. Farewell.' And other answer might he not have of them.

And also they make their sacrament of the altar of Therf bread, for our Lord made it of such bread, when he made his Maundy. And on the Shere-Thursday make they their Therf bread, in token of the Maundy, and dry it at the sun, and keep it all the year, and give it to sick men, instead of God's body. And they make but one unction, when they christen children. And they anoint not the sick men. And they say that there is no Purgatory, and that souls shall not have neither joy ne pain till the day of doom. And they say that fornication is no sin deadly, but a thing that is kindly, and that men and women should not wed but once, and whoso weddeth oftener than once, their children be bastards and gotten in sin. And their priests also be wedded.

And they say also that usury is no deadly sin. And they sell benefices of Holy Church. And so do men in other places: God amend it when his will is! And that is great sclaundre, for now is simony king crowned in Holy Church: God amend it for his mercy!

And they say, that in Lent, men shall not fast, ne sing Mass, but on the Saturday and on the Sunday. And they fast not on the Saturday, no time of the year, but it be Christmas Even or Easter Even. And they suffer not the Latins to sing at their altars; and if they do, by any adventure, anon they wash the altar with holy water. And they say that there should be but one Mass said at one altar upon one day.

And they say also that our Lord ne ate never meat; but he made token of eating. And also they say, that we sin deadly in shaving our beards, for the beard is token of a man, and gift of our Lord. And p. 15

they say that we sin deadly in eating of beasts that were forbidden in the Old Testament, and of the old Law, as swine, hares and other beasts, that chew not their cud. And they say that we sin, when we eat flesh on the days before Ash Wednesday, and of that that we eat flesh the Wednesday, and eggs and cheese upon the Fridays. And they accurse all those that abstain them to eat flesh the Saturday.

Also the Emperor of Constantinople maketh the patriarch, the archbishops and the bishops; and giveth the dignities and the benefices of churches and depriveth them that be unworthy, when he findeth any cause. And so is he lord both temporal and spiritual in his country.

And if ye will wit of their A.B.C. what letters they be, here ye may see them, with the names that they clepe them there amongst them: Alpha, Betha, Gama, Deltha, ɛlonge, ɛ brevis, Epilmon, Thetha, Iota, Kapda, Lapda, Mi, Ni, Xi, o brevis, Pi, Coph, Ro, Summa, Tau, Vi, Fy, Chi, Psi, Othomega, Diacosyn.

And all be it that these things touch not to one way, nevertheless they touch to that, that I have hight you, to shew you a part of customs and manners, and diversities of countries. And for this is the first country that is discordant in faith and in belief, and varieth from our faith, on this half the sea, therefore I have set it here, that ye may know the diversity that is between our faith and theirs. For many men have great liking, to hear speak of strange things of diverse countries.

CHAPTER IV

p. 16

[*Of the Way from Constantinople to Jerusalem*.] *Of Saint John the Evangelist*. *And of the Ypocras Daughter*, *transformed from a Woman to a Dragon*

Now return I again, for to teach you the way from Constantinople to Jerusalem. He that will through Turkey, he goeth toward the city of Nyke, and passeth through the gate of Chienetout, and always men see before them the hill of Chienetout, that is right high; and it is a mile and an half from Nyke.

And whoso will go by water, by the brace of St. George, and by the sea where St. Nicholas lieth, and toward many other places—first men go to an isle that is clept Sylo. In that isle groweth mastick on small trees, and out of them cometh gum as it were of plum-trees or of cherry-trees.

And after go men through the isle of Patmos; and there wrote St. John the Evangelist the Apocalypse. And ye shall understand, that St. John was of age thirty-two year, when our Lord suffered his passion; and after his passion, he lived sixty-seven year, and in the hundredth year of his age he died.

From Patmos men go unto Ephesus, a fair city and nigh to the sea. And there died St. John, and was buried behind the high altar in a tomb. And there is a fair church; for Christian men were wont to holden that place always. And in the tomb of St. John is nought but manna, that is clept angels' meat; for his body was translated into Paradise. And Turks hold now all that place, and the city and the church; and all Asia the less is y-clept Turkey. And ye shall understand, that St. John let make his grave there in his life, and laid himself therein all quick; and therefore some men say, that he died not, but that he resteth there till the day of doom. And, forsooth, there is a great marvel; for men may see there the earth of the tomb apertly many times stir and move, as there were quick things under.

And from Ephesus men go through many isles in the sea, unto the city of Patera, where St. Nicholas was born, and so to Martha, where he was chosen to be bishop; and there groweth right good wine and strong, and that men call wine of Martha. And from thence go men to the isle of Crete, that the emperor gave sometime to [the] Genoese. p. 17

And then pass men through the isles of Colcos and of Lango, of the which isles Ypocras was lord of. And some men say, that in the isle of Lango is yet the daughter of Ypocras, in form and likeness of a great dragon, that is a hundred fathom of length, as men say, for I have not seen her. And they of the isles call her Lady of the Land. And she lieth in an old castle, in a cave, and sheweth twice or thrice in the year, and she doth no harm to no man, but if men do her harm. And she was thus changed and

transformed, from a fair damosel, into likeness of a dragon, by a goddess that was clept Diana. And men say, that she shall so endure in that form of a dragon, unto [the] time that a knight come, that is so hardy, that dare come to her and kiss her on the mouth; and then shall she turn again to her own kind, and be a woman again, but after that she shall not live long.

And it is not long sithen, that a knight of Rhodes, that was hardy and doughty in arms, said that he would kiss her. And when he was upon his courser, and went to the castle, and entered into the cave, the dragon lift up her head against him. And when the knight saw her in that form so hideous and so horrible he fled away. And the dragon bare the knight upon a rock, maugre his head; and from that rock, she cast him into the sea. And so was lost both horse and man.

And also a young man, that wist not of the dragon, went out of a ship, and went through the isle till that he came to the castle, and came into the cave, and went so long, till that he found a chamber; and there he saw a damosel that combed her head and looked in a mirror; and she had much treasure about her. And he trowed that she had been a common woman, that dwelled there to receive men to folly. And he abode, till the damosel saw the shadow of him in the mirror. And she turned her toward him, and asked him what he would? And he said, he would be her leman or paramour. And she asked him, if that he were a knight? And he said, nay. And then she said, that he might not be her leman; but she bade him go again unto his fellows, and make him knight, and come again upon the morrow, and she should come out of the cave before him, and then come and kiss her on the mouth and have no dread,—for I shall do thee no manner of harm, albeit that thou see me in likeness of a dragon; for though thou see me hideous and horrible to look on, I do thee to wit that it is made by enchantment; for without doubt, I am none other than thou seest now, a woman, and therefore dread thee nought. And if thou kiss me, thou shalt have all this treasure, and be my lord, and lord also of all the isle. p. 18

And he departed from her and went to his fellows to ship, and let make him knight and came again upon the morrow for to kiss this damosel. And when he saw her come out of the cave in form of a dragon, so hideous and so horrible, he had so great dread, that he fled again to the ship, and she followed him. And when she saw that he turned not again, she began to cry, as a thing that had much sorrow; and then she turned again into her cave. And anon the knight died. And sithen hitherward might no knight see her, but that he died anon. But when a knight cometh, that is so hardy to kiss her, he shall not die; but he shall turn the damosel into her right form and kindly shape, and he shall be lord of all the countries and isles abovesaid.

And from thence men come to the isle of Rhodes, the which isle Hospitallers holden and govern; and that took they some-time from the emperor. And it was wont to be clept Collos; and so call it the Turks yet. And Saint Paul in his epistle writeth to them of that isle *ad Colossenses*. This isle is nigh eight hundred mile long from Constantinople.

CHAPTER V p. 19

[*Of diversities in Cyprus*; *of the Road from Cyprus to Jerusalem*, *and of the Marvel of a Fosse full of Sand*]

And from this isle of Rhodes men go to Cyprus, where be many vines, that first be red and after one year they become white; and those wines that be most white, be most clear and best of smell.

And men pass by that way, by a place that was wont to be a great city, and a great land; and the city was clept Cathailye, the which city and land was lost through folly of a young man. For he had a fair damosel, that he loved well to his paramour; and she died suddenly, and was done in a tomb of marble. And for the great lust that he had to her, he went in the night unto her tomb and opened it, and went in and lay by her, and went his way. And when it came to the end of nine months, there came a voice to him and said, Go to the tomb of that woman, and open it and behold what thou hast begotten on her; and if thou let to go, thou shalt have a great harm. And he yede and opened the

tomb, and there flew out an adder right hideous to see; the which as swithe flew about the city and the country, and soon after the city sank down. And there be many perilous passages without fail.

From Rhodes to Cyprus be five hundred mile and more. But men may go to Cyprus, and come not at Rhodes. Cyprus is right a good isle, and a fair and a great, and it hath four principal cities within him. And there is an Archbishop at Nicosea, and four other bishops in that land. And at Famagost is one of the principal havens of the sea that is in the world; and there arrive Christian men and Saracens and men of all nations. In Cyprus is the Hill of the Holy Cross; and there is an abbey of monks black and there is the cross of Dismas the good thief, as I have said before. And some men trow, that there is half the cross of our Lord; but it is not so, and they do evil that make men to believe so. p. 20

In Cyprus lieth Saint Zenonimus, of whom men of that country make great solemnity. And in the castle of Amours lieth the body of Saint-Hilarion, and men keep it right worshipfully. And beside Famagost was Saint Barnabas the apostle born.

In Cyprus men hunt with papyonns, that be like leopards, and they take wild beasts right well, and they be somewhat more than lions; and they take more sharply the beasts, and more deliver than do hounds.

In Cyprus is the manner of lords and all other men all to eat on the earth. For they make ditches in the earth all about in the hall, deep to the knee, and they do pave them; and when they will eat, they go therein and sit there. And the skill is for they may be the more fresh; for that land is much more hotter than it is here. And at great feasts, and for strangers, they set forms and tables, as men do in this country, but they had lever sit in the earth.

From Cyprus, men go to the land of Jerusalem by the sea: and in a day and in a night, he that hath good wind may come to the haven of Tyre, that is now clept Surrye. There was some-time a great city and a good of Christian men, but Saracens have destroyed it a great part; and they keep that haven right well, for dread of Christian men. Men might go more right to that haven, and come not in Cyprus, but they go gladly to Cyprus to rest them on the land, or else to buy things, that they have need to their living. On the sea-side men may find many rubies. And there is the well of the which holy writ speaketh of, and saith, *Fons ortorum*, *et puteus aquarum viventium*: that is to say, 'the well of gardens, and the ditch of living waters.'

In this city of Tyre, said the woman to our Lord, *Beatus venter qui te portavit*, *et ubera que succisti*: that is to say, 'Blessed be the body that thee bare, and the paps that thou suckedst.' And there our Lord forgave the woman of Canaan her sins. And before Tyre was wont to be the stone, on the which our Lord sat and preached, and on that stone was founded the Church of Saint Saviour. p. 21

And eight mile from Tyre, toward the east, upon the sea, is the city of Sarphen, in Sarepta of Sidonians. And there was wont for to dwell Elijah the prophet; and there raised he Jonas, the widow's son, from death to life. And five mile from Sarphen is the city of Sidon; of the which city, Dido was lady, that was Aeneas' wife, after the destruction of Troy, and that founded the city of Carthage in Africa, and now is clept Sidonsayete. And in the city of Tyre, reigned Agenor, the father of Dido. And sixteen mile from Sidon is Beirout. And from Beirout to Sardenare is three journeys and from Sardenare is five mile to Damascus.

And whoso will go long time on the sea, and come nearer to Jerusalem, he shall go from Cyprus by sea to Port Jaffa. For that is the next haven to Jerusalem; for from that haven is not but one day journey and a half to Jerusalem. And the town is called Jaffa; for one of the sons of Noah that hight Japhet founded it, and now it is clept Joppa. And ye shall understand, that it is one of the oldest towns of the world, for it was founded before Noah's flood. And yet there sheweth in the rock, there as the iron chains were fastened, that Andromeda, a great giant, was bounden with, and put in prison before Noah's flood, of the which giant, is a rib of his side that is forty foot long.

And whoso will arrive at the port of Tyre or of Surrye, that I have spoken of before, may go by land, if he will, to Jerusalem. And men go from Surrye unto the city of Akon in a day. And it was clept some-time Ptolemaïs. And it was some-time a city of Christian men, full fair, but it is now destroyed; and it stands upon the sea. And from Venice to Akon, by sea, is two thousand and four score miles of

Lombardy; and from Calabria, or from Sicily to Akon, by sea, is a 1300 miles of Lombardy; and the isle of Crete is right in the midway.

And beside the city of Akon, toward the sea, six score furlongs on the right side, toward the south, is the Hill of Carmel, where Elijah the prophet dwelled, and there was first the Order of Friars Carmelites founded. This hill is not right great, nor full high. And at the foot of this hill was sometime a good city of Christian men, that men clept Caiffa, for Caiaphas first founded it; but it is now all wasted. And on the left side of the Hill of Carmel is a town, that men clepe Saffre, and that is set on another hill. There Saint James and Saint John were born; and, in worship of them there is a fair church. And from Ptolemaïs, that men clepe now Akon, unto a great hill, that is clept Scale of Tyre, is one hundred furlongs. And beside the city of Akon runneth a little river, that is clept Belon. p. 22

And there nigh is the Foss of Mennon that is all round; and it is one hundred cubits of largeness, and it is all full of gravel, shining bright, of the which men make fair verres and clear. And men come from far, by water in ships, and by land with carts, for to fetch of that gravel. And though there be never so much taken away thereof in the day, at morrow it is as full again as ever it was; and that is a great marvel. And there is evermore great wind in that foss, that stirreth evermore the gravel, and maketh it trouble. And if any man do therein any manner metal, it turneth anon to glass. And the glass, that is made of that gravel, if it be done again into the gravel, it turneth anon into gravel as it was first. And therefore some men say, that it is a swallow of the gravelly sea.

Also from Akon, above-said, go men forth four journeys to the city of Palestine, that was of the Philistines, that now is clept Gaza, that is a gay city and a rich; and it is right fair and full of folk, and it is a little from the sea. And from this city brought Samson the strong the gates upon an high land, when he was taken in that city, and there he slew in a palace the king and himself, and great number of the best of the Philistines, the which had put out his eyen and shaved his head, and imprisoned him by treason of Dalida his paramour. And therefore he made fall upon them a great hall, when they were at meat.

And from thence go men to the city of Cesarea, and so to the Castle of Pilgrims, and so to Ascalon; and then to Jaffa, and so to Jerusalem.

And whoso will go by land through the land of Babylon, where the soldan dwelleth commonly, he must get grace of him and leave to go more siker through those lands and countries. p. 23

And for to go to the Mount of Sinai, before that men go to Jerusalem, they shall go from Gaza to the Castle of Daire. And after that, men come out of Syria, and enter into wilderness, and there the way is full sandy; and that wilderness and desert lasteth eight journeys, but always men find good inns, and all that they need of victuals. And men clepe that wilderness Achelleke. And when a man cometh out of that desert, he entereth into Egypt, that men clepe Egypt-Canopac, and after other language, men clepe it Morsyn. And there first men find a good town, that is clept Belethe; and it is at the end of the kingdom of Aleppo. And from thence men go to Babylon and to Cairo.

CHAPTER VI

Of many Names of Soldans, and of the Tower of Babylon

At Babylon there is a fair church of our Lady, where she dwelled seven year, when she fled out of the land of Judea for dread of King Herod. And there lieth the body of Saint Barbara the virgin and martyr. And there dwelled Joseph, when he was sold of his brethren. And there made Nebuchadnezzar the king put three children into the furnace of fire, for they were in the right truth of belief, the which children men clept Anania, Azariah, Mishael, as the Psalm of *Benedicite* saith: but Nebuchadnezzar clept them otherwise, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that is to say, God glorious, God victorious, and God over all things and realms: and that was for the miracle, that he saw God's Son go with the children through the fire, as he said.

There dwelleth the soldan in his Calahelyke (for there is commonly his seat) in a fair castle, strong and great, and well set upon a rock. In that castle dwell alway, to keep it and to serve the soldan, more then 6000 persons, that take all their necessaries off the soldan's court. I ought right well to know it; for I dwelled with him as soldier in his wars a great while against the Bedouins. And he would have married me full highly to a great prince's daughter, if I would have forsaken my law and my belief; but I thank God, I had no will to do it, for nothing that he behight me. p. 24

And ye shall understand that the soldan is lord of five kingdoms, that he hath conquered and appropred to him by strength. And these be the names: the kingdom of Canapac, that is Egypt; and the kingdom of Jerusalem, where that David and Solomon were kings; and the kingdom of Syria, of the which the city of Damascus was chief; and the kingdom of Aleppo in the land of Mathe; and the kingdom Arabia, that was to one of the three kings, that made offering to our Lord, when he was born. And many other lands he holdeth in his hand. And therewithal he holdeth caliphs, that is a full great thing in their language, and it is as much to say as king.

And there were wont to be five soldans; but now there is no more but he of Egypt. And the first soldan was Zarocon, that was of Media, as was father to Saladin that took the Caliph of Egypt and slew him, and was made soldan by strength. After that was Soldan Saladin, in whose time the King of England, Richard the First, with many other, kept the passage, that Saladin ne might not pass. After Saladin reigned his son Boradin, and after him his nephew. After that, the Comanians that were in servage in Egypt, felt themselves that they were of great power, they chose them a soldan amongst them, the which made him to be clept Melechsalan. And in his time entered into the country of the kings of France Saint Louis, and fought with him; and [the soldan] took him and imprisoned him; and this [soldan] was slain by his own servants. And after, they chose another to be soldan, that they clept Tympieman; and he let deliver Saint Louis out of prison for a certain ransom. And after, one of these p. 25
Comanians reigned, that hight Cachas, and slew Tympieman, for to be soldan; and made him be clept Melechmenes. And after another that had to name Bendochdare, that slew Melechmenes, for to be sultan, and clept himself Melechdare. In his time entered the good King Edward of England into Syria, and did great harm to the Saracens. And after, was this soldan empoisoned at Damascus, and his son thought to reign after him by heritage, and made him to be clept Melechsache; but another that had to name Elphy, chased him out of the country and made him soldan. This man took the city of Tripoli and destroyed many of the Christian men, the year of grace 1289, and after was he imprisoned of another that would be soldan, but he was anon slain. After that was the son of Elphy chosen to be soldan, and clept him Melechasseraff, and he took the city of Akon and chased out the Christian men; and this was also empoisoned, and then was his brother made soldan, and was clept Melechnasser. And after, one that was clept Guytoga took him and put him in prison in the castle of Mountroyal, and made him soldan by strength, and clept him Melechadel; and he was of Tartary. But the Comanians chased him out of the country, and did him much sorrow, and made one of themself soldan, that had to name Lachin. And he made him to be clept Melechmanser, the which on a day played at the chess, and his sword lay beside him; and so befell, that one wrathed him, and with his own proper sword he was slain. And after that, they were at great discord, for to make a soldan; and finally they accorded to Melechnasser, that Guytoga had put in prison at Mountroyal. And this reigned long and governed so that his eldest son was chosen after him, Melechmader, the which his brother let slay privily for to have the lordship, and made him to be clept Melechmadabron, and he soldan when I departed from those countries.

And wit ye well that the soldan may lead out of Egypt more than 20,000 men of arms, and out of Syria, and out of Turkey and out of other countries that he holds, he may arrere more than 50,000. And all those be at his wages, and they be always at him, without the folk of his country, that is p. 26
without number. And every each of them hath by year the mountance of six score florins; but it behoveth, that every of them hold three horses and a camel. And by the cities and by towns be admirals, that have the governance of the people; one hath to govern four, and another hath to govern five, another more, and another well more. And as many taketh the admiral by him alone, as all the other soldiers have under him; and therefore, when the soldan will advance any worthy knight, he maketh him an admiral. And when it is any dearth, the knights be right poor, and then they sell both their horse and their harness.

And the soldan hath four wives, one Christian and three Saracens, of the which one dwelleth at Jerusalem, and another at Damascus, and another at Ascalon; and when them list, they remove to other cities, and when the soldan will he may go to visit them. And he hath as many paramours as

him liketh. For he maketh to come before him the fairest and the noblest of birth, and the gentlest damosels of his country, and he maketh them to be kept and served full honourably. And when he will have one to lie with him, he maketh them all to come before him, and he beholdeth in all, which of them is most to his pleasure, and to her anon he sendeth or casteth a ring from his finger. And then anon she shall be bathed and richly attired, and anointed with delicate things of sweet smell, and then led to the soldan's chamber; and thus he doth as often as him list, when he will have any of them.

And before the soldan cometh no stranger, but if he be clothed in cloth of gold, or of Tartary or of Camaka, in the Saracens' guise, and as the Saracens use. And it behoveth, that anon at the first sight that men see the soldan, be it in window or in what place else, that men kneel to him and kiss the earth, for that is the manner to do reverence to the soldan of them that speak with him. And when that messengers of strange countries come before him, the meinie of the soldan, when the strangers speak to him, they be about the soldan with swords drawn and gisarmes and axes, their arms lifted up p. 27
in high with those weapons for to smite upon them, if they say any word that is displeasance to the soldan. And also, no stranger cometh before him, but that he maketh him some promise and grant of that the [stranger] asketh reasonably; by so it be not against his law. And so do other princes beyond, for they say that no man shall come before no prince, but that [he be] better, and shall be more gladder in departing from his presence than he was at the coming before him.

And understandeth, that that Babylon that I have spoken of, where that the sultan dwelleth, is not that great Babylon where the diversity of languages was first made for vengeance by the miracle of God, when the great Tower of Babel was begun to be made; of the which the walls were sixty-four furlongs of height; that is in the great desert of Arabia, upon the way as men go toward the kingdom of Chaldea. But it is full long since that any man durst nigh to the tower; for it is all desert and full of dragons and great serpents, and full of diverse venomous beasts all about. That tower, with the city, was of twenty-five mile in circuit of the walls, as they of the country say, and as men may deem by estimation, after that men tell of the country.

And though it be clept the Tower of Babylon, yet nevertheless, there were ordained within many mansions and many great dwelling-places, in length and breadth. And that tower contained great country in circuit, for the tower alone contained ten mile square. That tower founded King Nimrod that was king of that country; and he was the first king of the world. And he let make an image in the likeness of his father, and constrained all his subjects for to worship it; and anon began other lords to do the same, and so began the idols and the simulacres first.

The town and the city were full well set in a fair country and a plain that men clepe the country of Samar, of the which the walls of the city were two hundred cubits in height, and fifty cubits of deepness; and the river of Euphrates ran throughout the city and about the tower also. But Cyrus the King of Persia took from them the river, and destroyed all the city and the tower also; for he departed p. 28
that river in 360 small rivers, because that he had sworn, that he should put the river in such point, that a woman might well pass there, without casting off of her clothes, forasmuch as he had lost many worthy men that trowed to pass that river by swimming.

And from Babylon where the soldan dwelleth, to go right between the Orient and the Septentrion toward the great Babylon, is forty journeys to pass by desert. But it is not the great Babylon in the land and in the power of the said soldan, but it is in the power and the lordship of Persia, but he holdeth it of the great Chan, that is the greatest emperor and the most sovereign lord of all the parts beyond, and he is lord of the isles of Cathay and of many other isles and of a great part of Ind, and his land marcheth unto Prester John's Land, and he holdeth so much land, that he knoweth not the end: and he is more mighty and greater lord without comparison than is the soldan: of his royal estate and of his might I shall speak more plenerly, when I shall speak of the land and of the country of Ind.

Also the city of Mecca where Mohammet lieth is of the great deserts of Arabia; and there lieth [the] body of him full honourably in their temple, that the Saracens clepen Musketh. And it is from Babylon the less, where the soldan dwelleth, unto Mecca above-said, into a thirty-two journeys.

And wit well, that the realm of Arabia is a full great country, but therein is over-much desert. And no man may dwell there in that desert for default of water, for that land is all gravelly and full of sand. And it is dry and no thing fruitful, because that it hath no moisture; and therefore is there so much desert. And if it had rivers and wells, and the land also were as it is in other parts, it should be as full of people and as full inhabited with folk as in other places; for there is full great multitude of people,

whereas the land is inhabited. Arabia dureth from the ends of the realm of Chaldea unto the last end of Africa, and marcheth to the land of Idumea toward the end of Botron. And in Chaldea the chief city is Bagdad. And of Africa the chief city is Carthage, that Dido, that was Eneas's wife, founded; p. 29
the which Eneas was of the city of Troy, and after was King of Italy.

Mesopotamia stretcheth also unto the deserts of Arabia, and it is a great country. In this country is the city of Haran, where Abraham's father dwelled, and from whence Abraham departed by commandment of the angel. And of that city was Ephraim, that was a great clerk and a great doctor. And Theophilus was of that city also, that our lady saved from our enemy. And Mesopotamia dureth from the river of Euphrates, unto the river of Tigris, for it is between those two rivers.

And beyond the river of Tigris is Chaldea, that is a full great kingdom. In that realm, at Bagdad above-said, was wont to dwell the caliph, that was wont to be both as Emperor and Pope of the Arabians, so that he was lord spiritual and temporal; and he was successor to Mahommet, and of his generation. That city of Bagdad was wont to be clept Sutis, and Nebuchadnezzar founded it; and there dwelled the holy prophet Daniel, and there he saw visions of heaven, and there he made the exposition of dreams.

And in old time there were wont to be three caliphs, he of Arabia and of Chaldea dwelt in the city of Bagdad above-said; and at Cairo beside Babylon dwelt the Caliph of Egypt; and at Morocco, upon the West Sea, dwelt the Caliph of the people of Barbary and of Africans. And now is there none of the caliphs, nor nought have been since the time of the Soldan Saladin; for from that time hither the soldan clepeth himself caliph, and so have the caliphs lost their name.

Also witeth well, that Babylon the less, where the soldan dwelleth, and at the city of Cairo that is nigh beside it, be great huge cities many and fair; and that one sitteth nigh that other. Babylon sitteth upon the river of Gyson, sometimes clept Nile, that cometh out of Paradise terrestrial.

That river of Nile, all the year, when the sun entereth into the sign of Cancer, it beginneth to wax, and it waxeth always as long as the sun is in Cancer and in the sign of the Lion; and it waxeth in such manner, that it is sometimes so great, that it is twenty cubits or more of deepness, and then it doth p. 30
great harm to the goods that be upon the land. For then may no man travail to plough the lands for the great moisture, and therefore is there dear time in that country. And also, when it waxeth little, it is dear time in that country, for default of moisture. And when the sun is in the sign of Virgo, then beginneth the river for to wane and to decrease little and little, so that when the sun is entered into the sign of Libra, then they enter between these rivers. This river cometh, running from Paradise terrestrial, between the deserts of Ind, and after it smiteth unto land, and runneth long time many great countries under earth. And after it goeth out under an high hill, that men clepe Alothe, that is between Ind and Ethiopia the mountance of five months' journeys from the entry of Ethiopia; and after it environeth all Ethiopia and Mauritania, and goeth all along from the land of Egypt unto the city of Alexandria to the end of Egypt, and there it falleth into the sea. About this river be many birds and fowls, as sikonies, that they clepen ibes.

CHAPTER VII

Of the Country of Egypt; *of the Bird Phoenix of Arabia*; *of the City of Cairo*; *of the Cunning to know Balm and to prove it*; *and of the Garners of Joseph*

EGYPT is a long country, but it is straight, that is to say narrow, for they may not enlarge it toward the desert for default of water. And the country is set along upon the river of Nile, by as much as that river may serve by floods or otherwise, that when it floweth it may spread abroad through the country; so is the country large of length. For there it raineth not but little in that country, and for that cause they have no water, but if it be of that flood of that river. And forasmuch as it ne raineth not in that country, but the air is alway pure and clear, therefore in that country be the good astronomers, for p. 31
they find there no clouds to letten them. Also the city of Cairo is right great and more huge than that of Babylon the less, and it sitteth above toward the desert of Syria, a little above the river above-said.

In Egypt there be two parts: the height, that is toward Ethiopia, and the lower, that is toward Arabia. In Egypt is the land of Rameses and the land of Goshen. Egypt is a strong country, for it hath many shrewd havens because of the great rocks that be strong and dangerous to pass by. And at Egypt, toward the east, is the Red Sea, that dureth unto the city of Coston; and toward the west is the country of Lybia, that is a full dry land and little of fruit, for it is overmuch plenty of heat, and that land is clept Fusthe. And toward the part meridional is Ethiopia. And toward the north is the desert, that dureth unto Syria, and so is the country strong on all sides. And it is well a fifteen journeys of length, and more than two so much of desert, and it is but two journeys in largeness. And between Egypt and Nubia it hath well a twelve journeys of desert. And men of Nubia be Christian, but they be black as the Moors for great heat of the sun.

In Egypt there be five provinces: that one is Sahythe; that other Demeseer; another Resith, that is an isle in the Nile; another Alexandria; and another the land of Damietta. That city was wont to be right strong, but it was twice won of the Christian men, and therefore after that the Saracens beat down the walls; and with the walls the tower thereof, the Saracens made another city more far from the sea, and clept it the new Damietta; so that now no man dwelleth at the rather town of Damietta. At that city of Damietta is one of the havens of Egypt; and at Alexandria is that other. That is a full strong city, but there is no water to drink, but if it come by conduit from Nile, that entereth into their cisterns; and whoso stopped that water from them, they might not endure there. In Egypt there be but few forcelets or castles, because that the country is so strong of himself.

At the deserts of Egypt was a worthy man, that was an holy hermit, and there met with him a monster p. 32
(that is to say, a monster is a thing deformed against kind both of man or of beast or of anything else, and that is clept a monster). And this monster, that met with this holy hermit, was as it had been a man, that had two horns trenchant on his forehead; and he had a body like a man unto the navel, and beneath he had the body like a goat. And the hermit asked him what he was. And the monster answered him, and said he was a deadly creature, such as God had formed, and dwelt in those deserts in purchasing his sustenance. And [he] besought the hermit, that he would pray God for him, the which that came from heaven for to save all mankind, and was born of a maiden and suffered passion and death (as we well know) and by whom we live and be. And yet is the head with the two horns of that monster at Alexandria for a marvel.

In Egypt is the city of Heliopolis, that is to say, the city of the Sun. In that city there is a temple, made round after the shape of the Temple of Jerusalem. The priests of that temple have all their writings, under the date of the fowl that is clept phoenix; and there is none but one in all the world. And he cometh to burn himself upon the altar of that temple at the end of five hundred year; for so long he liveth. And at the five hundred years' end, the priests array their altar honestly, and put thereupon spices and sulphur vif and other things that will burn lightly; and then the bird phoenix cometh and burneth himself to ashes. And the first day next after, men find in the ashes a worm; and the second day next after, men find a bird quick and perfect; and the third day next after, he flieth his way. And so there is no more birds of that kind in all the world, but it alone, and truly that is a great miracle of God. And men may well liken that bird unto God, because that there ne is no God but one; and also, that our Lord arose from death to life the third day. This bird men see often-time fly in those countries; and he is not mickle more than an eagle. And he hath a crest of feathers upon his head more great than the peacock hath; and is neck his yellow after colour of an oriel that is a stone p. 33
well shining, and his beak is coloured blue as ind; and his wings be of purple colour, and his tail is barred overthwart with green and yellow and red. And he is a full fair bird to look upon, against the sun, for he shineth full gloriously and nobly.

Also in Egypt be gardens, that have trees and herbs, the which bear fruits seven times in the year. And in that land men find many fair emeralds and enough; and therefore they be greater cheap. Also when it raineth once in the summer in the land of Egypt, then is all the country full of great mires. Also at Cairo, that I spake of before, sell men commonly both men and women of other laws as we do here beasts in the market. And there is a common house in that city that is all full of small furnaces, and thither bring women of the town their eyren of hens, of geese, and or ducks for to be put into those furnaces. And they that keep that house cover them with heat of horse dung, without hen, goose or duck or any other fowl. And at the end of three weeks or of a month they come again and take their chickens and flourish them and bring them forth, so that all the country is full of them. And so men do there both winter and summer.

Also in that country and in others also, men find long apples to sell, in their season, and men clepe them apples of Paradise; and they be right sweet and of good savour. And though ye cut them in never so many gobbets or parts, overthwart or endlong, evermore ye shall find in the midst the figure of the Holy Cross of our Lord Jesu. But they will rot within eight days, and for that cause men may not carry of those apples to no far countries; of them men find the mountance of a hundred in a basket, and they have great leaves of a foot and a half of length, and they be convenably large. And men find there also the apple tree of Adam, that have a bite at one of the sides; and there be also fig trees that bear no leaves, but figs upon the small branches; and men clepe them figs of Pharaoh.

Also beside Cairo, without that city, is the field where balm groweth; and it cometh out on small trees, that be none higher than to a man's breeks' girdle, and they seem as wood that is of the wild vine. And in that field be seven wells, that our Lord Jesu Christ made with one of his feet, when he went to play with other children. That field is not so well closed, but that men may enter at their own list; but in that season that the balm is growing, men put thereto good keeping, that no man dare be hardy to enter. p. 34

This balm groweth in no place, but only there. And though that men bring of the plants, for to plant in other countries, they grow well and fair; but they bring forth no fructuous thing, and the leaves of balm fall not. And men cut the branches with a sharp flintstone, or with a sharp bone, when men will go to cut them; for whoso cut them with iron, it would destroy his virtue and his nature.

And the Saracens clepe the wood *Enonch-balse*, and the fruit, the which is as cubebs, they clepe *Abebissam*, and the liquor that droppeth from the branches they clepe *Guybalse*. And men make always that balm to be tilled of the Christian men, or else it would not fructify; as the Saracens say themselves, for it hath been often-time proved. Men say also, that the balm groweth in Ind the more, in that desert where Alexander spake to the trees of the sun and of the moon, but I have not seen it; for I have not been so far above upward, because that there be too many perilous passages.

And wit ye well, that a man ought to take good keep for to buy balm, but if he con know it right well, for he may right lightly be deceived. For men sell a gum, that men clepe turpentine, instead of balm, and they put thereto a little balm for to give good odour. And some put wax in oil of the wood of the fruit of balm, and say that it is balm. And some distil cloves of gilofre and of spikenard of Spain and of other spices, that be well smelling; and the liquor that goeth out thereof they clepe it balm, and they think that they have balm, and they have none. For the Saracens counterfeit it by subtlety of craft for to deceive the Christian men, as I have seen full many a time; and after them the merchants and the apothecaries counterfeit it eft sones, and then it is less worth, and a great deal worse. p. 35

But if it like you, I shall shew how ye shall know and prove, to the end that ye shall not be deceived. First ye shall well know, that the natural balm is full clear, and of citron colour and strongly smelling; and if it be thick, or red or black, it is sophisticate, that is to say, counterfeited and made like it for deceit. And understand, that if ye will put a little balm in the palm of your hand against the sun, if it be fine and good, ye ne shall not suffer your hand against the heat of the sun. Also take a little balm with the point of a knife, and touch it to the fire, and if it burn it is a good sign. After take also a drop of balm, and put it into a dish, or in a cup with milk of a goat, and if it be natural balm anon it will take and beclippe the milk. Or put a drop of balm in clear water in a cup of silver or in a clear basin, stir it well with the clear water; and if the balm be fine and of his own kind, the water shall never trouble; and if the balm be sophisticate, that is to say counterfeited, the water shall become anon trouble; and also if the balm be fine it shall fall to the bottom of the vessel, as though it were quicksilver, for the fine balm is more heavy twice than is the balm that is sophisticate and counterfeited. Now I have spoken of balm.

And now also I shall speak of another thing that is beyond Babylon, above the flood of the Nile, toward the desert between Africa and Egypt; that is to say, of the garners of Joseph, that he let make for to keep the grains for the peril of the dear years. And they be made of stone, full well made of masons' craft; of the which two be marvellously great and high, and the tother ne be not so great. And every garner hath a gate for to enter within, a little high from the earth; for the land is wasted and fallen since the garners were made. And within they be all full of serpents. And above the garners without be many scriptures of diverse languages. And some men say, that they be sepultures of great lords, that were sometime, but that is not true, for all the common rumour and speech is of all the people there, both far and near, that they be the garners of Joseph; and so find they in their p. 36

scriptures, and in their chronicles. On the other part, if they were sepultures, they should not be void within, ne they should have no gates for to enter within; for ye may well know, that tombs and sepultures be not made of such greatness, nor of such highness; wherefore it is not to believe, that they be tombs or sepultures.

In Egypt also there be diverse languages and diverse letters, and of other manner and condition than there be in other parts. As I shall devise you, such as they be, and the names how they clepe them, to such intent, that ye may know the difference of them and of others,—Athoimis, Bimchi, Chinok, Duram, Eni, Fin, Gomor, Heket, Janny, Karacta, Luzanin, Miche, Naryn, Oldach, Pilon, Qyn, Yron, Sichen, Thola, Urmron, Yph and Zarm, Thoit.

CHAPTER VIII

Of the Isle of Sicily; *of the way from Babylon to the Mount Sinai*; *of the Church of Saint Katherine and of all the marvels there*

Now will I return again, ere I proceed any further, for to declare to you the other ways, that draw toward Babylon, where the sultan himself dwelleth, that is at the entry of Egypt; for as much as many folk go thither first and after that to the Mount Sinai, and after return to Jerusalem, as I have said you here before. For they fulfil first the more long pilgrimage, and after return again by the next ways, because that the more nigh way is the more worthy, and that is Jerusalem; for no other pilgrimage is not like in comparison to it. But for to fulfil their pilgrimages more easily and more sikerly, men go first the longer way rather than the nearer way.

But whoso will go to Babylon by another way, more short from the countries of the west that I have rehearsed before, or from other countries next to them—then men go by France, by Burgundy and by Lombardy. It needeth not to tell you the names of the cities, nor of the towns that be in that way, for the way is common, and it is known of many nations. And there be many havens [where] men take the sea. Some men take the sea at Genoa, some at Venice, and pass by the sea Adriatic, that is clept the Gulf of Venice, that departeth Italy and Greece on that side; and some go to Naples, some to Rome, and from Rome to Brindisi and there they take the sea, and in many other places where that havens be. And men go by Tuscany, by Campania, by Calabria, by Apulia, and by the hills of Italy, by Corsica, by Sardinia, and by Sicily, that is a great isle and a good. p. 37

In that isle of Sicily there is a manner of a garden, in the which be many diverse fruits; and the garden is always green and flourishing, all the seasons of the year as well in winter as in summer. That isle holds in compass about 350 French miles. And between Sicily and Italy there is not but a little arm of the sea, that men clepe the Farde of Messina. And Sicily is between the sea Adriatic and the sea of Lombardy. And from Sicily into Calabria is but eight miles of Lombardy.

And in Sicily there is a manner of serpent, by the which men assay and prove, whether their children be bastards or no, or of lawful marriage: for if they be born in right marriage, the serpents go about them, and do them no harm, and if they be born in avoutry, the serpents bite them and envenom them. And thus many wedded men prove if the children be their own.

Also in that isle is the Mount Etna, that men clepe Mount Gybelle, and the volcanoes that be evermore burning. And there be seven places that burn and that cast out diverse flames and diverse colour: and by the changing of those flames, men of that country know when it shall be dearth or good time, or cold or hot or moist or dry, or in all other manners how the time shall be governed. And from Italy unto the volcanoes ne is but twenty-five mile. And men say, that the volcanoes be ways of hell.

And whoso goeth by Pisa, if that men list to go that way, there is an arm of the sea, where that men go to other havens in those marches. And then men pass by the isle of Greaf that is at Genoa. And after arrive men in Greece at the haven of the city of Myrok, or at the haven of Valone, or at the city of Duras; and there is a Duke at Duras, or at other havens in those marches; and so men go to Constantinople. And after go men by water to the isle of Crete and to the isle of Rhodes, and so to p. 38

Cyprus, and so to Athens, and from thence to Constantinople. To hold the more right way by sea, it is well a thousand eight hundred and four score mile of Lombardy. And after from Cyprus men go by sea, and leave Jerusalem and all the country on the left hand, unto Egypt, and arrive at the city of Damietta, that was wont to be full strong, and it sits at the entry of Egypt. And from Damietta go men to the city of Alexandria, that sits also upon the sea. In that city was Saint Catherine beheaded: and there was Saint Mark the evangelist martyred and buried, but the Emperor Leo made his bones to be brought to Venice.

And yet there is at Alexandria a fair church, all white without paintures; and so be all the other churches that were of the Christian men, all white within, for the Paynims and the Saracens made them white for to fordo the images of saints that were painted on the walls. That city of Alexandria is well thirty furlongs in length, but it is but ten on largeness; and it is a full noble city and a fair. At that city entereth the river of Nile into the sea, as I to you have said before. In that river men find many precious stones, and much also of lignum aloes; and it is a manner of wood, that cometh out of Paradise terrestrial, the which is good for many diverse medicines, and it is right dear-worth. And from Alexandria men go to Babylon, where the sultan dwelleth; that sits also upon the river of Nile: and this way is the most short, for to go straight unto Babylon.

Now shall I say you also the way, that goeth from Babylon to the Mount of Sinai, where Saint Catherine lieth. He must pass by the deserts of Arabia, by the which deserts Moses led the people of Israel. And then pass men by the well that Moses made with his hand in the deserts, when the people p. 39
grucched; for they found nothing to drink. And then pass men by the Well of Marah, of the which the water was first bitter; but the children of Israel put therein a tree, and anon the water was sweet and good for to drink. And then go men by desert unto the vale of Elim, in the which vale be twelve wells; and there be seventy-two trees of palm, that bear the dates the which Moses found with the children of Israel. And from that valley is but a good journey to the Mount of Sinai.

And whoso will go by another way from Babylon, then men go by the Red Sea, that is an arm of the sea Ocean. And there passed Moses with the children of Israel, over-thwart the sea all dry, when Pharaoh the King of Egypt chased them. And that sea is well a six mile of largeness in length; and in that sea was Pharaoh drowned and all his host that he led. That sea is not more red than another sea; but in some place thereof is the gravel red, and therefore men clepen it the Red Sea. That sea runneth to the ends of Arabia and of Palestine.

That sea lasteth more than a four journeys, and then go men by desert unto the Vale of Elim, and from thence to the Mount of Sinai. And ye may well understand, that by this desert no man may go on horseback, because that there ne is neither meat for horse ne water to drink; and for that cause men pass that desert with camels. For the camel finds alway meat in trees and on bushes, that he feedeth him with: and he may well fast from drink two days or three. And that may no horse do.

And wit well that from Babylon to the Mount Sinai is well a twelve good journeys, and some men make them more. And some men hasten them and pain them, and therefore they make them less. And always men find latiners to go with them in the countries, and further beyond, into time that men con the language: and it behoveth men to bear victuals with them, that shall dure them in those deserts, and other necessaries for to live by.

And the Mount of Sinai is clept the Desert of Sin, that is for to say, the bush burning; because there p. 40
Moses saw our Lord God many times in the form of fire burning upon that hill, and also in a bush burning, and spake to him. And that was at the foot of the hill. There is an abbey of monks, well builded and well closed with gates of iron for dread of the wild beasts; and the monks be Arabians or men of Greece. And there [is] a great convent, and all they be as hermits, and they drink no wine, but if it be on principal feasts; and they be full devout men, and live poorly and simply with joutes and with dates, and they do great abstinence and penances.

There is the Church of Saint Catherine, in the which be many lamps burning; for they have of oil of olives enough, both for to burn in their lamps and to eat also. And that plenty have they by the miracle of God; for the ravens and the crows and the choughs and other fowls of the country assemble them there every year once, and fly thither as in pilgrimage; and everych of them bringeth a branch of the bays or of olive in their beaks instead of offering, and leave them there; of the which the monks make great plenty of oil. And this is a great marvel. And sith that fowls that have no

kindly wit or reason go thither to seek that glorious Virgin, well more ought men then to seek her, and to worship her.

Also behind the altar of that church is the place where Moses saw our Lord God in a burning bush. And when the monks enter into that place, they do off both hosen and shoon or boots always, because that our Lord said to Moses, Do off thy hosen and thy shoon, for the place that thou standest on is land holy and blessed. And the monks clepe that place Dozoleel, that is to say, the shadow of God. And beside the high altar, three degrees of height is the fertre of alabaster, where the bones of Saint Catherine lie. And the prelate of the monks sheweth the relics to the pilgrims, and with an instrument of silver he froteth the bones; and then there goeth out a little oil, as though it were a manner sweating, that is neither like to oil ne to balm, but it is full sweet of smell; and of that they give a little p. 41
to the pilgrims, for there goeth out but little quantity of the liquor. And after that they shew the head of Saint Catherine, and the cloth that she was wrapped in, that is yet all bloody; and in that same cloth so wrapped, the angels bare her body to the Mount Sinai, and there they buried her with it. And then they shew the bush, that burned and wasted nought, in the which our Lord spake to Moses, and other relics enough.

Also, when the prelate of the abbey is dead, I have understood, by information, that his lamp quencheth. And when they choose another prelate, if he be a good man and worthy to be prelate, his lamp shall light with the grace of God without touching of any man. For everych of them hath a lamp by himself, and by their lamps they know well when any of them shall die. For when any shall die, the light beginneth to change and to wax dim; and if he be chosen to be prelate, and is not worthy, his lamp quencheth anon. And other men have told me, that he that singeth the mass for the prelate that is dead—he shall find upon the altar the name written of him that shall be prelate chosen. And so upon a day, I asked of the monks, both one and other, how this befell. But they would not tell me nothing, into the time that I said that they should not hide the grace that God did them, but that they should publish it to make the people have the more devotion, and that they did sin to hide God's miracle, as me seemed. For the miracles that God hath done and yet doth every day, be the witness of his might and of his marvels, as David saith in the Psalter: *Mirabilia testimonia tua*, *Domine*, that is to say, 'Lord thy marvels be thy witness.' And then they told me, both one and other, how it befell full many a time, but more I might not have of them.

In that abbey ne entereth not no fly, ne toads ne newts, ne such foul venomous beasts, ne lice ne fleas, by the miracle of God, and of our Lady. For there were wont to be so many such manner of filths, that the monks were in will to leave the place and the abbey, and were from thence upon the mountain above to eschew that place; and our Lady came to them and bade them turn again, and from p. 42
thence forwards never entered such filth in that place amongst them, ne never shall enter hereafter. Also, before the gate is the well, where Moses smote the stone, of the which the water came out plenteously.

From that abbey men go up the mountain of Moses, by many degrees. And there men find first a church of our Lady, where that she met the monks, when they fled away for the vermin above-said. And more high upon that mountain is the chapel of Elijah the prophet; and that place they clepe Horeb, whereof holy writ speaketh, *Et ambulavit in fortitudine cibi illius usque*, *ad montem Oreb*; that is to say, 'And he went in strength of that meat unto the hill of God, Horeb.' And there nigh is the vine that Saint John the Evangelist planted that men clepe raisins of Staphis. And a little above is the chapel of Moses, and the rock where Moses fled to for dread when he saw our Lord face to face. And in that rock is printed the form of his body, for he smote so strongly and so hard himself in that rock, that all his body was dolven within through the miracle of God. And there beside is the place where our Lord took to Moses the Ten Commandments of the Law. And there is the cave under the rock where Moses dwelt, when he fasted forty days and forty nights. But he died in the Land of Promission, and no man knoweth where he was buried. And from that mountain men pass a great valley for to go to another mountain, where Saint Catherine was buried of the angels of the Lord. And in that valley is a church of forty martyrs, and there sing the monks of the abbey, often-time: and that valley is right cold. And after men go up the mountain of Saint Catherine, that is more high than the mount of Moses; and there, where Saint Catherine was buried, is neither church nor chapel, nor other dwelling place, but there is an heap of stones about the place, where body of her, was put of the angels. There was wont to be a chapel, but it was cast down, and yet lie the stones there. And albeit that the Collect of Saint Catherine says, that it is the place where our Lord betaught the Ten Commandments to Moses, and there, where the blessed Virgin Saint Catherine was buried, that is to p. 43

understand in one country, or in one place bearing one name; for both that one and that other is clept the mount of Sinai. But it is a great way from that one to that other, and a great deep valley between them.

CHAPTER IX

Of the Desert between the Church of Saint Catherine and Jerusalem. Of the Dry Tree; and how Roses came first into the World

Now, after that men have visited those holy places, then will they turn toward Jerusalem. And then will they take leave of the monks, and recommend themselves to their prayers. And then they give the pilgrims of their victuals for to pass with the deserts toward Syria. And those deserts dure well a thirteen journeys.

In that desert dwell many of Arabians, that men clepe Bedouins and Ascopards, and they be folk full of all evil conditions. And they have none houses, but tents, that they make of skins of beasts, as of camels and of other beasts that they eat; and there beneath these they couch them and dwell in place where they may find water, as on the Red Sea or elsewhere: for in that desert is full great default of water, and often-time it falleth that where men find water at one time in a place it faileth another time; and for that skill they make none habitations there. These folk that I speak of, they till not the land, and they labour nought; for they eat no bread, but if it be any that dwell nigh a good town, that go thither and eat bread sometime. And they roast their flesh and their fish upon the hot stones against the sun. And they be strong men and well-fighting; and there so is much multitude of that folk, that they be without number. And they ne reck of nothing, ne do not but chase after beasts to eat them. And they reck nothing of their life, and therefore they fear not the sultan, ne no other prince; p. 44
but they dare well war with them, if they do anything that is grievance to them. And they have often-times war with the sultan, and, namely, that time that I was with him. And they bear but one shield and one spear, without other arms; and they wrap their heads and their necks with a great quantity of white linen cloth; and they be right felonous and foul, and of cursed kind.

And when men pass this desert, in coming toward Jerusalem, they come to Bersabe (Beersheba), that was wont to be a full fair town and a delectable of Christian men; and yet there be some of their churches. In that town dwelled Abraham the patriarch, a long time. That town of Bersabe founded Bersabe (Bathsheba), the wife of Sir Uriah the Knight, on the which King David gat Solomen the Wise, that was king after David upon the twelve kindreds of Jerusalem and reigned forty year.

And from thence go men to the city of Hebron, that is the mountance of twelve good mile. And it was clept sometime the Vale of Mamre, and some-time it was clept the Vale of Tears, because that Adam wept there an hundred year for the death of Abel his son, that Cain slew. Hebron was wont to be the principal city of the Philistines, and there dwelled some time the giants. And that city was also sacerdotal, that is to say, sanctuary of the tribe of Judah; and it was so free, that men received there all manner of fugitives of other places for their evil deeds. In Hebron Joshua, Caleb and their company came first to aspy, how they might win the land of Behest. In Hebron reigned first king David seven year and a half; and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three year and a half.

And in Hebron be all the sepultures of the patriarchs, Adam, Abraham, Isaac, and of Jacob; and of their wives, Eve, Sarah and Rebecca, and of Leah; the which sepultures the Saracens keep full curiously, and have the place in great reverence for the holy fathers, the patriarchs that lie there. And they suffer no Christian man to enter into that place, but if it be of special grace of the sultan; for they hold Christian men and Jews as dogs, and they say, that they should not enter into so holy place. And p. 45
men clepe that place, where they lie, Double Spelunk, or Double Cave, or Double Ditch, forasmuch as that one lieth above that other. And the Saracens clepe that place in their language, *Karicarba*, that is to say, 'The Place of Patriarchs.' And the Jews clepe that place *Arboth*. And in that same place was Abraham's house, and there he sat and saw three persons, and worshipped but one; as holy writ saith, *Tres vidit et unum adoravit*, that is to say, 'He saw three and worshipped one': and of those same received Abraham the angels into his house.

And right fast by that place is a cave in the rock, where Adam and Eve dwelled when they were put out of Paradise; and there got they their children. And in that same place was Adam formed and made, after that some men say: (for men were wont for to clepe that place the field of Damascus, because that it was in the lordship of Damascus), and from thence was he translated into Paradise of delights, as they say; and after that he was driven out of Paradise he was there left. And the same day that he was put in Paradise, the same day he was put out, for anon he sinned. There beginneth the Vale of Hebron, that dureth nigh to Jerusalem. There the angel commanded Adam that he should dwell with his wife Eve, of the which he gat Seth; of which tribe, that is to say kindred, Jesu Christ was born.

In that valley is a field, where men draw out of the earth a thing that men clepe cambile, and they eat it instead of spices, and they bear it to sell. And men may not make the hole or the cave, where it is taken out of the earth, so deep or so wide, but that it is, at the year's end, full again up to the sides, through the grace of God.

And two mile from Hebron is the grave of Lot, that was Abraham's brother.

And a little from Hebron is the mount of Mamre, of the which the valley taketh his name. And there is a tree of oak, that the Saracens clepe *Dirpe*, that is of Abraham's time: the which men clepe the Dry Tree. And they say that it hath been there since the beginning of the world, and was some-time green p. 46
and bare leaves, unto the time that our Lord died on the cross, and then it dried: and so did all the trees that were then in the world. And some say, by their prophecies, that a lord, a prince of the west side of the world, shall win the Land of Promission that is the Holy Land with help of Christian men, and he shall do sing a mass under that dry tree; and then the tree shall wax green and bear both fruit and leaves, and through that miracle many Saracens and Jews shall be turned to Christian faith: and, therefore, they do great worship thereto, and keep it full busily. And, albeit so, that it be dry, natheles yet he beareth great virtue, for certainly he that hath a little thereof upon him, it healeth him of the falling evil, and his horse shall not be a-foundered: and many other virtues it hath; wherefore men hold it full precious.

From Hebron men go to Bethlehem in half a day, for it is but five mile; and it is full fair way, by plains and woods full delectable. Bethlehem is a little city, long and narrow and well walled, and in each side enclosed with good ditches: and it was wont to be clept Ephrata, as holy writ saith, *Ecce*, *audivimus eum in Ephrata*, that is to say, 'Lo, we heard him in Ephrata.' And toward the east end of the city is a full fair church and a gracious, and it hath many towers, pinacles and corners, full strong and curiously made; and within that church be forty-four pillars of marble, great and fair.

And between the city and the church is the field *Floridus*, that is to say, the 'field flourished.' For as much as a fair maiden was blamed with wrong, and slandered that she had done fornication; for which cause she was demned to death, and to be burnt in that place, to the which she was led. And, as the fire began to burn about her, she made her prayers to our Lord, that as wisely as she was not guilty of that sin, that he would help her and make it to be known to all men, of his merciful grace. And when she had thus said, she entered into the fire, and anon was the fire quenched and out; and the brands that were burning became red rose-trees, and the brands that were not kindled became p. 47
white rose-trees, full of roses. And these were the first rose-trees and roses, both white and red, that ever any man saw; and thus was this maiden saved by the grace of God. And therefore is that field clept the field of God flourished, for it was full of roses.

Also beside the choir of the church, at the right side, as men come downward sixteen degrees, is the place where our Lord was born, that is full well dight of marble, and full richly painted with gold, silver, azure and other colours. And three paces beside is the crib of the ox and the ass. And beside that is the place where the star fell, that led the three kings, Jaspar, Melchior and Balthazar: but men of Greece clepe them thus, *Galgalath*, *Malgalath*, and *Seraphie*, and the Jews clepe them, in this manner, in Hebrew, *Appelius*, *Amerrius*, and *Damasus*. These three kings offered to our Lord, gold, incense and myrrh, and they met together through miracle of God; for they met together in a city in Ind, that men clepe Cassak, that is a fifty-three journeys from Bethlehem; and they were at Bethlehem the thirteenth day; and that was the fourth day after that they had seen the star, when they met in that city, and thus they were in nine days from that city at Bethlehem, and that was great miracle.

Also, under the cloister of the church, by eighteen degrees at the right side, is the charnel of the Innocents, where their bones lie. And before the place where our Lord was born is the tomb of Saint Jerome, that was a priest and a cardinal, that translated the Bible and the Psalter from Hebrew into Latin: and without the minster is the chair that he sat in when he translated it. And fast beside that church, a sixty fathom, is a church of Saint Nicholas, where our Lady rested her after she was lighted of our Lord; and forasmuch as she had too much milk in her paps, that grieved her, she milked them on the red stones of marble, so that the traces may yet be seen, in the stones, all white.

And ye shall understand, that all that dwell in Bethlehem be Christian men.

And there be fair vines about the city, and great plenty of wine, that the Christian men have do let make. But the Saracens ne till not no vines, ne they drink no wine: for their books of their law, that Mahomet betoke them, which they clepe their *Al Koran*, and some clepe it *Mesaph*, and in another language it is clept *Harme*, and the same book forbiddeth them to drink wine. For in that book, Mahomet cursed all those that drink wine and all them that sell it: for some men say, that he slew once an hermit in his drunkenness, that he loved full well; and therefore he cursed wine and them that drink it. But his curse be turned on to his own head, as holy writ saith, *Et in virticem ipsius iniquitas ejus descendet*, that is for to say, 'His wickedness shall turn and fall in his own head.' p. 48

And also the Saracens bring forth no pigs, nor they eat no swine's flesh, for they say it is brother to man, and it was forbidden by the old law; and they hold him all accursed that eat thereof. Also in the land of Palestine and in the land of Egypt, they eat but little or none of flesh of veal or of beef, but if be so old, that he may no more travel for old; for it is forbidden, and for because they have but few of them; therefore they nourish them for to ere their lands.

In this city of Bethlehem was David the king born; and he had sixty wives, and the first wife was called Michal; and also he had three hundred lemans.

And from Bethlehem unto Jerusalem is but two mile; and in the way to Jerusalem half a mile from Bethlehem is a church, where the angel said to the shepherds of the birth of Christ. And in that way is the tomb of Rachel, that was Joseph's mother, the patriarch; and she died anon after that she was delivered of her son Benjamin. And there she was buried of Jacob her husband, and he let set twelve great stones on her, in token that she had born twelve children. In the same way, half mile from Jerusalem, appeared the star to the three kings. In that way also be many churches of Christian men, by the which men go towards the city of Jerusalem.

CHAPTER X

p. 49

Of the Pilgrimages in Jerusalem, and of the Holy Places thereabout

After, for to speak of Jerusalem the holy city: ye shall understand, that it stands full fair between hills, and there be no rivers ne wells, but water cometh by conduit from Hebron. And ye shall understand, that Jerusalem of old time, unto the time of Melchisadech, was clept Jebus; and after it was clept Salem, unto the time of King David, that put these two names together, and clept it Jebusalem; and after that, King Solomon clept it Jerosolomye; and after that, men clept it Jerusalem, and so it is clept yet.

And about Jerusalem is the kingdom of Syria. And there beside is the land of Palestine, and beside it is Ascalon, and beside that is the land of Maritaine. But Jerusalem is in the land of Judea, and it is clept Judea, for that Judas Maccabeus was king of that country; and it marcheth eastward to the kingdom of Arabia; on the south side to the land of Egypt; and on the west side to the Great Sea; on the north side, towards the kingdom of Syria and to the sea of Cyprus. In Jerusalem was wont to be a patriarch; and archbishops and bishops about in the country. About Jerusalem be these cities: Hebron, at seven mile; Jericho, at six mile; Beersheba, at eight mile; Ascalon, at seventeen mile; Jaffa, at sixteen mile; Ramath, at three mile; and Bethlehem, at two mile. And a two mile from Bethlehem, toward the south, is the Church of St. Karitot, that was abbot there, for whom they made

much dole amongst the monks when he should die; and yet they be in mourning in the wise that they made their lamentation for him the first time; and it is full great pity to behold.

This country and land of Jerusalem hath been in many divers nations' hands, and often, therefore, hath the country suffered much tribulation for the sin of the people that dwell there. For that country p. 50
hath been in the hands of all nations; that is to say, of Jews, of Canaanites, Assyrians, Persians, Medes, Macedonians, of Greeks, Romans, of Christian men, of Saracens, Barbarians, Turks, Tartars, and of many other divers nations; for God will not that it be long in the hands of traitors ne of sinners, be they Christian or other. And now have the heathen men held that land in their hands forty year and more; but they shall not hold it long, if God will.

And ye shall understand, that when men come to Jerusalem, their first pilgrimage is to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where our Lord was buried, that is without the city on the north side; but it is now enclosed in with the town wall. And there is a full fair church, all round, and open above, and covered with lead; and on the west side is a fair tower and an high for bells, strongly made.

And in the midst of the church is a tabernacle, as it were a little house, made with a low little door, and that tabernacle is made in manner of half a compass, right curiously and richly made of gold and azure and other rich colours full nobly made. And in the right side of that tabernacle is the sepulchre of our Lord; and the tabernacle is eight foot long, and five foot wide, and eleven foot in height. And it is not long sith the sepulchre was all open, that men might kiss it and touch it; but for pilgrims that came thither pained them to break the stone in pieces or in powder, therefore the soldan hath do make a wall about the sepulchre that no man may touch it: but in the left side of the wall of the tabernacle is, well the height of a man, a great stone to the quantity of a man's head, that was of the holy sepulchre; and that stone kiss the pilgrims that come thither. In that tabernacle be no windows, but it is all made light with lamps that hang before the sepulchre. And there is a lamp that hangeth before the sepulchre, that burneth light; and on the Good Friday it goeth out by himself, [and lighteth again by him self] at that hour that our Lord rose from death to life.

Also within the church, at the right side, beside the choir of the church, is the mount of Calvary, p. 51
where our Lord was put on the cross; and it is a rock of white colour and a little medled with red. And the cross was set in a mortise in the same rock. And on that rock dropped the wounds of our Lord when he was pined on the cross. And that is clept Golgotha.

And men go up to that Golgotha by degrees; and in the place of that mortise was Adam's head found after Noah's flood, in token that the sins of Adam should be bought in that same place. And upon that rock made Abraham sacrifice to our Lord. And there is an altar; and before that altar lie Godefray de Bouillon and Baldwin, and other Christian kings of Jerusalem.

And there, nigh where our Lord was crucified, is this written in Greek:

† Ο θεὸς Βασιλεῦς ἡμῶν πρὸ αἰώνων εἰργάσατο σωτηρίαν ἐν μέσῳ τῆς γῆς;

that is to say, in Latin,—

Deus Rex noster ante secula operatus est salutem, *in medio terrae*;

that is to say,—

This God our King, *before the worlds*, *hath wrought health in midst of the earth*.

And also on that rock, where the cross was set, is written within the rock these words:

† Ο ἴδεις, ἐστί Βάσις τῆς πίστεως ὅλης τοῦ κόσμου τούτου;

that is to say, in Latin,—

Quod vides, *est fundamentum totius fidei mundi hujus*;

that is to say,—

† *That thou seest, is the ground of all the faith of this world.*

And ye shall understand, that when our Lord was done upon the cross, he was thirty-three year and three months of old. And the prophecy of David saith thus: *Quadraginta annis proximus fui generationi huic*; that is to say, 'Forty year was I neighbour to this kindred.' And thus should it seem p. 52
that the prophecies were not true. But they be both true; for in old time men made a year of ten months, of the which March was the first and December was the last. But Gaius, that was Emperor of Rome, put these two months thereto, January and February, and ordained the year of twelve months; that is to say, 365 days, without leap year, after the proper course of the sun. And therefore after counting of ten months of the year, he died in the fortieth year, as the prophet said. And after the year of twelve months, he was of age thirty-three year and three months.

Also, within the mount of Calvary, on the right side, is an altar, where the pillar lieth that our Lord Jesu was bounden to when he was scourged. And there beside be four pillars of stone, that always drop water; and some men say that they weep for our Lord's death. And nigh that altar is a place under earth forty-two degrees of deepness, where the holy cross was found, by the wit of Saint Helen, under a rock where the Jews had hid it. And that was the very cross assayed; for they found three crosses, one of our Lord, and two of the two thieves; and Saint Helen proved them by a dead body that arose from death to life, when that it was laid on it, that our Lord died on. And thereby in the wall is the place where the four nails of our Lord were hid: for he had two in his hands and two in his feet. And, of one of these, the Emperor of Constantinople made a bridle to his horse to bear him in battle; and, through virtue thereof, he overcame his enemies, and won all the land of Asia the less, that is to say, Turkey, Armenia the less and the more, and from Syria to Jerusalem, from Arabia to Persia, from Mesopotamia to the kingdom of Aleppo, from Egypt the high and the low and all the other kingdoms unto the depth of Ethiopia, and into Ind the less that then was Christian.

And there were in that time many good holy men and holy hermits, of whom the book of Father's lives speaketh, and they be now in Paynims' and Saracens' hands: but when God Almighty will, right as the lands were lost through sin of Christian men, so shall they be won again by Christian men p. 53
through help of God.

And in midst of that church is a compass, in the which Joseph of Arimathea laid the body of our Lord when he had taken him down off the cross; and there he washed the wounds of our Lord. And that compass, say men, is the midst of the world.

And in the church of the sepulchre, on the north side, is the place where our Lord was put in prison (for he was in prison in many places); and there is a part of the chain that he was bounden with; and there he appeared first to Mary Magdalene when he was risen, and she wend that he had been a gardener.

In the church of Saint Sepulchre was wont to be canons of the order of Saint Augustine, and had a prior, but the patriarch was their sovereign.

And without the doors of the church, on the right side as men go upward eighteen grees, said our Lord to his mother, *Mulier*, *ecce Filius tuus*; that is to say, Woman, lo! thy Son! And after that he said to John, his disciple, *Ecce mater tua*; that is to say, Lo! behold thy mother! And these words he said on the cross. And on these grees went our Lord when he bare the cross on his shoulder. And under these grees is a chapel, and in that chapel sing priests, Indians, that is to say, priests of Ind, not after our law, but after theirs; and alway they make their sacrament of the altar, saying, *Pater Noster* and other prayers therewith; with the which prayers they say the words that the sacrament is made of, for they ne know not the additions that many popes have made; but they sing with good devotion. And there near, is the place where that our Lord rested him when he was weary for bearing of the cross.

And ye shall understand that before the church of the sepulchre is the city more feeble than in any other part, for the great plain that is between the church and the city. And toward the east side, without the walls of the city, is the vale of Jehosaphat that toucheth to the walls as though it were a large ditch. And above that vale of Jehosaphat, out of the city, is the church of Saint Stephen where he was stoned to death. And there beside, is the Golden Gate, that may not be opened, by the which p. 54
gate our Lord entered on Palm-Sunday upon an ass: and the gate opened against him when he would

go unto the temple; and yet appear the steps of the ass's feet in three places of the degrees that be of full hard stone.

And before the church of Saint Sepulchre, toward the south, at 200 paces, is the great hospital of Saint John, of which the hospitallers had their foundation. And within the palace of the sick men of that hospital be 124 pillars of stone. And in the walls of the house, without the number above-said, there be fifty-four pillars that bear up the house. And from that hospital to go toward the east is a full fair church, that is clept *Nôtre Dame la Grande*. And then is there another church right nigh, that is clept *Nôtre Dame de Latine*. And there were Mary Cleophas and Mary Magdalene, and tore their hair when our Lord was pained in the cross.

CHAPTER XI

Of the Temple of our Lord. Of the Cruelty of King Herod. Of the Mount Sion. Of Probatica Piscina; *and of Natatorium Siloe*

And from the church of the sepulchre, toward the east, at eight score paces, is *Templum Domini*. It is right a fair house, and it is all round and high, and covered with lead. And it is well paved with white marble. But the Saracens will not suffer no Christian man ne Jews to come therein, for they say that none so foul sinful men should not come in so holy place: but I came in there and in other places there I would, for I had letters of the soldan with his great seal, and commonly other men have but his signet. In the which letters he commanded, of his special grace, to all his subjects, to let me see all the places, and to inform me pleinly all the mysteries of every place, and to conduct me from city to city, if it were need, and buxomly to receive me and my company, and for to obey to all my requests reasonable if they were not greatly against the royal power and dignity of the soldan or of his law. And to others, that ask him grace, such as have served him, he ne giveth not but his signet, the which they make to be borne before them hanging on a spear. And the folk of the country do great worship and reverence to his signet or seal, and kneel thereto as lowly as we do to *Corpus Domini*. And yet men do full greater reverence to his letters; for the admiral and all other lords that they be shewed to, before or they receive them, they kneel down; and then they take them and put them on their heads; and after, they kiss them and then they read them, kneeling with great reverence; and then they offer them to do all that the bearer asketh. p. 55

And in this *Templum Domini* were some-time canons regulars, and they had an abbot to whom they were obedient; and in this temple was Charlemagne when that the angel brought him the prepuce of our Lord Jesus Christ of his circumcision; and after, King Charles let bring it to Paris into his chapel, and after that he let bring it to Peyteres, and after that to Chartres.

And ye shall understand, that this is not the temple that Solomon made, for that temple dured not but 1102 year. For Titus, Vespasian's son, Emperor of Rome, had laid siege about Jerusalem for to discomfit the Jews; for they put our Lord to death, without leave of the emperor. And, when he had won the city, he burnt the temple and beat it down, and all the city, and took the Jews and did them to death—1,100,000; and the others he put in prison and sold them to servage,—thirty for one penny; for they said they bought Jesu for thirty pennies, and he made of them better cheap when he gave thirty for one penny.

And after that time, Julian Apostate, that was emperor, gave leave to the Jews to make the temple of Jerusalem, for he hated Christian men. And yet he was christened, but he forsook his law, and became a renegade. And when the Jews had made the temple, came an earthquaking, and cast it down (as God would) and destroyed all that they had made. p. 56

And after that, Adrian, that was Emperor of Rome, and of the lineage of Troy, made Jerusalem again and the temple in the same manner as Solomon made it. And he would not suffer no Jews to dwell there, but only Christian men. For although it were so that he was not christened, yet he loved Christian men more than any other nation save his own. This emperor let enclose the church of Saint

Sepulchre, and walled it within the city; that, before, was without the city, long time before. And he would have changed the name of Jerusalem, and have clept it Aelia; but that name lasted not long.

Also, ye shall understand, that the Saracens do much reverence to that temple, and they say, that that place is right holy. And when they go in they go bare-foot, and kneel many times. And when my fellows and I saw that, when we came in we did off our shoes and came in bare-foot, and thought that we should do as much worship and reverence thereto, as any of the misbelieving men should, and as great compunction in heart to have.

This temple is sixty-four cubits of wideness, and as many in length; and of height it is six score cubits. And it is within, all about, made with pillars of marble. And in the middle place of the temple be many high stages, of fourteen degrees of height, made with good pillars all about: and this place the Jews call *Sancta Sanctorum*; that is to say, 'Holy of Hallows.' And, in that place, cometh no man save only their prelate, that maketh their sacrifice. And the folk stand all about, in diverse stages, after they be of dignity or of worship, so that they all may see the sacrifice. And in that temple be four entries, and the gates be of cypress, well made and curiously dight: and within the east gate our Lord said, 'Here is Jerusalem.' And in the north side of that temple, within the gate, there is a well, but it runneth nought, of the which holy writ speaketh of and saith, *Vidi aquam egredientem de templo*; that is to say, 'I saw water come out of the temple.'

And on that other side of the temple there is a rock that men clepe Moriach, but after it was clept p. 57
Bethel, where the ark of God with relics of Jews were wont to be put. That ark or hutch with the relics Titus led with him to Rome, when he had discomfited all the Jews. In that ark were the Ten Commandments, and of Aaron's yard, and Moses' yard with the which he made the Red Sea depart, as it had been a wall, on the right side and on the left side, whiles that the people of Israel passed the sea dry-foot: and with that yard he smote the rock, and the water came out of it: and with that yard he did many wonders. And therein was a vessel of gold full of manna, and clothing and ornaments and the tabernacle of Aaron, and a tabernacle square of gold with twelve precious stones, and a box of jasper green with four figures and eight names of our Lord, and seven candlesticks of gold, and twelve pots of gold, and four censers of gold, and an altar of gold, and four lions of gold upon the which they bare cherubin of gold twelve spans long, and the circle of swans of heaven with a tabernacle of gold and a table of silver, and two trumps of silver, and seven barley loaves and all the other relics that were before the birth of our Lord Jesu Christ.

And upon that rock was Jacob sleeping when he saw the angels go up and down by a ladder, and he said, *Vere locus iste sanctus est*, *et ego ignorabam*; that is to say, 'Forsooth this place is holy, and I wist it nought.' And there an angel held Jacob still, and turned his name, and clept him Israel. And in that same place David saw the angel that smote the folk with a sword, and put it up bloody in the sheath. And in that same rock was Saint Simeon when he received our Lord into the temple. And in this rock he set him when the Jews would have stoned him; and a star came down and gave him light. And upon that rock preached our Lord often-time to the people. And out that said temple our Lord drove out the buyers and the sellers. And upon that rock our Lord set him when the Jews would have stoned him; and the rock clave in two, and in that cleaving was our Lord hid, and there came down a star and gave light and served him with clarity. And upon that rock sat our Lady, and learned p. 58
her psalter. And there our Lord forgave the woman her sins, that was found in avowtry. And there was our Lord circumcised. And there the angels shewed tidings to Zacharias of the birth of Saint Baptist his son. And there offered first Melchisadech bread and wine to our Lord, in token of the sacrament that was to come. And there fell David praying to our Lord and to the angel that smote the people, that he would have mercy on him and on the people: and our Lord heard his prayer, and therefore would he make the temple in that place, but our Lord forbade him by an angel; for he had done treason when he let slay Uriah the worthy knight, for to have Bathsheba his wife. And therefore, all the purveyance that he had ordained to make the temple with he took it Solomon his son, and he made it. And he prayed our Lord, that all those that prayed to him in that place with good heart—that he would hear their prayer and grant it them if they asked it rightfully: and our Lord granted it him, and therefore Solomon clept that temple the Temple of Counsel and of Help of God.

And without the gate of that temple is an altar where Jews were in wont to offer doves and turtles. And between the temple and that altar was Zacharias slain. And upon the pinnacle of that temple was our Lord brought for to be tempted of the enemy, the fiend. And on the height of that pinnacle the Jews set Saint James, and cast him down to the earth, that first was Bishop of Jerusalem. And at the

entry of that temple, toward the west, is the gate that is clept *Porta Speciosa*. And nigh beside that temple, upon the right side, is a church, covered with lead, that is clept Solomon's School.

And from that temple towards the south, right nigh, is the temple of Solomon, that is right fair and well polished. And in that temple dwell the Knights of the Temple that were wont to be clept Templars; and that was the foundation of their order, so that there dwelled knights and in *Templo Domini* canons regulars.

From that temple toward the east, a six score paces, in the corner of the city, is the bath of our Lord; p. 59
and in that bath was wont to come water from Paradise, and yet it droppeth. And there beside is our Lady's bed. And fast by is the temple of Saint Simeon, and without the cloister of the temple, toward the north, is a full fair church of Saint Anne, our Lady's mother; and there was our Lady conceived; and before that church is a great tree that began to grow the same night. And under that church, in going down by twenty-two degrees, lieth Joachim, our Lady's father, in a fair tomb of stone; and there beside lay some-time Saint Anne, his wife; but Saint Helen let translate her to Constantinople. And in that church is a well, in manner of a cistern, that is clept *Probatica Piscina*, that hath five entries. Into that well angels were wont to come from heaven and bathe them within. And what man, that first bathed him after the moving of the water, was made whole of what manner of sickness that he had. And there our Lord healed a man of the palsy that lay thirty-eight year, and our Lord said to him, *Tolle grabatum tuum et ambula*, that is to say, 'Take thy bed and go.' And there beside was Pilate's house.

And fast by is King Herod's house, that let slay the innocents. This Herod was over-much cursed and cruel. For first he let slay his wife that he loved right well; and for the passing love that he had to her when he saw her dead, he fell in a rage and out of his wit a great while; and sithen he came again to his wit. And after he let slay his two sons that he had of that wife. And after that he let slay another of his wives, and a son that he had with her. And after that he let slay his own mother; and he would have slain his brother also, but he died suddenly. And after that he did all the harm that he could or might. And after he fell into sickness; and when he felt that he should die, he sent after his sister and after all the lords of his land; and when they were come he let command them to prison. And then he said to his sister, he wist well that men of the country would make no sorrow for his death; and therefore he made his sister swear that she should let smite off all the heads of the lords when he were dead; and then should all the land make sorrow for his death, and else, nought; and thus he made his p. 60
testament. But his sister fulfilled not his will. For, as soon as he was dead, she delivered all the lords out of prison and let them go, each lord to his own, and told them all the purpose of her brother's ordinance. And so was this cursed king never made sorrow for, as he supposed for to have been. And ye shall understand, that in that time there were three Herods, of great name and fame for their cruelty. This Herod, of which I have spoken of was Herod Ascalonite; and he that let behead Saint John the Baptist was Herod Antipas; and he that let smite off Saint James's head was Herod Agrippa, and he put Saint Peter in prison.

Also, furthermore, in the city is the church of Saint Saviour; and there is the left arm of John Chrisostome, and the more part of the head of Saint Stephen. And on that other side in the street, toward the south as men go to Mount Sion, is a church of Saint James, where he was beheaded.

And from that church, a six score paces, is the Mount Sion. And there is a fair church of our Lady, where she dwelled; and there she died. And there was wont to be an abbot of canons regulars. And from thence was she borne of the apostles unto the vale of Jehosaphat. And there is the stone that the angel brought to our Lord from the mount of Sinai, and it is of that colour that the rock is of Saint Catherine. And there beside is the gate where through our Lady went, when she was with child, when she went to Bethlehem. Also at the entry of the Mount Sion is a chapel. And in that chapel is the stone, great and large, with the which the sepulchre was covered with, when Joseph of Arimathea had put our Lord therein; the which stone the three Marys saw turn upward when they came to the sepulchre the day of his resurrection, and there found an angel that told them of our Lord's uprising from death to life. And there also is a stone in the wall, beside the gate, of the pillar that our Lord was scourged at. And there was Annas's house, that was bishop of the Jews in that time. And there was our Lord examined in the night, and scourged and smitten and villainous entreated. And that p. 61
same place Saint Peter forsook our Lord thrice or the cock crew. And there is a part of the table that he made his supper on, when he made his maundy with his disciples, when he gave them his flesh and his blood in form of bread and wine.

And under that chapel, thirty-two degrees, is the place where our Lord washed his disciples' feet, and yet is the vessel where the water was. And there beside that same vessel was Saint Stephen buried. And there is the altar where our Lady heard the angels sing mass. And there appeared first our Lord to his disciples after his resurrection, the gates enclosed, and said to them, *Pax vobis*! that is to say, 'Peace to you!' And on that mount appeared Christ to Saint Thomas the apostle and bade him assay his wounds; and then believed he first, and said, *Dominus meus et Deus meus*! that is to say 'My Lord and my God!' In the same church, beside the altar, were all the apostles on Whitsunday, when the Holy Ghost descended on them in likeness of fire. And there made our Lord his pasque with his disciples. And there slept Saint John the evangelist upon the breast of our Lord Jesu Christ, and saw sleeping many heavenly privities.

Mount Sion is within the city, and it is a little higher than the other side of the city; and the city is stronger on that side than on that other side. For at the foot of the Mount Sion is a fair castle and a strong that the soldan let make. In the Mount Sion were buried King David and King Solomon, and many other kings, Jews of Jerusalem. And there is the place where the Jews would have cast up the body of our Lady when the apostles bare the body to be buried in the vale of Jehosaphat. And there is the place where Saint Peter wept full tenderly after that he had forsaken our Lord. And a stone's cast from that chapel is another chapel, where our Lord was judged, for that time was there Caiaphas's house. From that chapel, to go toward the east, at seven score paces, is a deep cave under the rock, that is clept the Galilee of our Lord, where Saint Peter hid him when he had forsaken our Lord. *Item*, between the Mount Sion and the Temple of Solomon is the place where our Lord raised the maiden in her father's house. p. 62

Under the Mount Sion, toward the vale of Jehosaphat, is a well that is clept *Natatorium Siloe*. And there was our Lord washed after his baptism; and there made our Lord the blind man to see. And there was y-buried Isaiah the prophet. Also, straight from *Natatorium Siloe*, is an image, of stone and of old ancient work, that Absalom let make, and because thereof men clepe it the hand of Absalom. And fast by is yet the tree of elder that Judas hanged himself upon, for despair that he had, when he sold and betrayed our Lord. And there beside was the synagogue, where the bishops of Jews and the Pharisees came together and held their council; and there cast Judas the thirty pence before them, and said that he had sinned betraying our Lord. And there nigh was the house of the apostles Philip and Jacob Alphei. And on that other side of Mount Sion, toward the south, beyond the vale a stone's cast, is Aceldama; that is to say, the field of blood, that was bought for the thirty pence, that our Lord was sold for. And in that field be many tombs of Christian men, for there be many pilgrims graven. And there be many oratories, chapels and hermitages, where hermits were wont to dwell. And toward the east, an hundred paces, is the charnel of the hospital of Saint John, where men were wont to put the bones of dead men.

Also from Jerusalem, toward the west, is a fair church, where the tree of the cross grew. And two mile from thence is a fair church, where our Lady met with Elizabeth, when they were both with child; and Saint John stirred in his mother's womb, and made reverence to his Creator that he saw not. And under the altar of that church is the place where Saint John was born. And from that church is a mile to the castle of Emmaus: and there also our Lord shewed him to two of his disciples after his resurrection. Also on that other side, 200 paces from Jerusalem, is a church, where was wont to be the cave of the lion. And under that church, at thirty degrees of deepness, were interred 12,000 martyrs, in the time of King Cosdroe that the lion met with, all in a night, by the will of God. p. 63

Also from Jerusalem, two mile, is the Mount Joy, a full fair place and a delicious; and there lieth Samuel the prophet in a fair tomb. And men clepe it Mount Joy, for it giveth joy to pilgrims' hearts, because that there men see first Jerusalem.

Also between Jerusalem and the mount of Olivet is the vale of Jehosaphat, under the walls of the city, as I have said before. And in the midst of the vale is a little river that men clepe *Torrens Cedron*, and above it, overthwart, lay a tree (that the cross was made of) that men yede over on. And fast by it is a little pit in the earth, where the foot of the pillar is yet interred; and there was our Lord first scourged, for he was scourged and villainously entreated in many places. Also in the middle place of the vale of Jehosaphat is the church of our Lady: and it is of forty-three degrees under the earth unto the sepulchre of our Lady. And our Lady was of age, when she died, seventy-two year. And beside the sepulchre of our Lady is an altar, where our Lord forgave Saint Peter all his sins. And from thence, toward the west, under an altar, is a well that cometh out of the river of Paradise. And wit well, that

that church is full low in the earth, and some is all within the earth. But I suppose well, that it was not so founded. But for because that Jerusalem hath often-time been destroyed and the walls abated and beten down and tumbled into the vale, and that they have been so filled again and the ground enhanced; and for that skill is the church so low within the earth. And, natheles, men say there commonly, that the earth hath so been cloven sith the time that our Lady was there buried; and yet men say there, that it waxeth and groweth every day, without doubt. In that church were wont to be monks black, that had their abbot.

And beside that church is a chapel, beside the rock that hight Gethsemane. And there was our Lord kissed of Judas; and there was he taken of the Jews. And there left our Lord his disciples, when he went to pray before his passion, when he prayed and said, *Pater*, *si fieri potest*, *transeat a me calix iste*; that is to say, 'Father, if it may be, do let this chalice go from me': and, when he came again to his disciples, he found them sleeping. And in the rock within the chapel yet appear the fingers of our Lord's hand, when he put them in the rock, when the Jews would have taken him. p. 64

And from thence, a stone's cast towards the south, is another chapel, where our Lord sweat drops of blood. And there, right nigh, is the tomb of King Jehosaphat, of whom the vale beareth the name. This Jehosaphat was king of that country, and was converted by an hermit, that was a worthy man and did much good. And from thence, a bow draught towards the south, is the church, where Saint James and Zachariah the prophet were buried.

And above the vale is the mount of Olivet; and it is clept so for the plenty of olives that grow there. That mount is more high than the city of Jerusalem is; and, therefore, may men upon that mount see many of the streets of the city. And between that mount and the city is not but the vale of Jehosaphat that is not full large. And from that mount styed our Lord Jesu Christ to heaven upon Ascension Day; and yet there sheweth the shape of his left foot in the stone. And there is a church where was wont to be an abbot and canons regulars. And a little thence, twenty-eight paces, is a chapel; and therein is the stone on the which our Lord sat, when he preached the eight blessings and said thus: *Beau pauperes spiritu*: and there he taught his disciples the *Pater Noster*; and wrote with his finger in a stone. And there nigh is a church of Saint Mary Egyptian, and there she lieth in a tomb. And from thence toward the east, a three bow shot, is Bethphage, to the which our Lord sent Saint Peter and Saint James for to seek the ass upon Palm-Sunday, and rode upon that ass to Jerusalem.

And in coming down from the mount of Olivet, toward the east, is a castle that is clept Bethany. And there dwelt Simon leprous, and there harboured our Lord: and after he was baptised of the apostles and was clept Julian, and was made bishop; and this is the same Julian that men clepe to for good harbourage, for our Lord harboured with him in his house. And in that house our Lord forgave Mary Magdalene her sins: there she washed his feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. And there served Saint Martha our Lord. There our Lord raised Lazarus from death to life, that was dead four days and stank, that was brother to Mary Magdalene and to Martha. And there dwelt also Mary Cleophas. That castle is well a mile long from Jerusalem. Also in coming down from the mount of Olivet is the place where our Lord wept upon Jerusalem. And there beside is the place where our Lady appeared to Saint Thomas the apostle after her assumption, and gave him her girdle. And right nigh is the stone where our Lord often-time sat upon when he preached; and upon that same he shall sit at the day of doom, right as himself said. p. 65

Also after the mount of Olivet is the mount of Galilee. There assembled the apostles when Mary Magdalene came and told them of Christ's uprising. And there, between the Mount Olivet and the Mount Galilee, is a church, where the angel said to our Lady of her death.

Also from Bethany to Jericho was sometime a little city, but it is now all destroyed, and now is there but a little village. That city took Joshua by miracle of God and commandment of the angel, and destroyed it, and cursed it and all them that bigged it again. Of that city was Zaccheus the dwarf that clomb up into the sycamore tree for to see our Lord, because he was so little he might not see him for the people. And of that city was Rahab the common woman that escaped alone with them of her lineage: and she often-time refreshed and fed the messengers of Israel, and kept them from many great perils of death; and, therefore, she had good reward, as holy writ saith: *Qui accipit prophetam in nomine meo*, *mercedem prophetae accipiet*; that is to say, 'He that taketh a prophet in my name, he shall take meed of the prophet.' And so had she. For she prophesied to the messengers, saying, *Novi quod Dominus tradet vobis terram hanc*; that is to say, 'I wot well, that our Lord shall betake you this p. 66

land': and so he did. And after, Salomon, Naasson's son, wedded her, and from that time was she a worthy woman, and served God well.

Also from Bethany go men to flom Jordan by a mountain and through desert. And it is nigh a day journey from Bethany, toward the east, to a great hill, where our Lord fasted forty days. Upon that hill the enemy of hell bare our Lord and tempted him, and said, *Dic ut lapides isti panes fiant*; that is to say, 'Say, that these stones be made loaves.' In that place, upon the hill, was wont to be a fair church; but it is all destroyed, so that there is now but an hermitage, that a manner of Christian men hold, that be clept Georgians, for Saint George converted them. Upon that hill dwelt Abraham a great while, and therefore men clepe it Abraham's Garden. And between the hill and this garden runneth a little brook of water that was wont to be bitter; but, by the blessing of Elisha the prophet, it became sweet and good to drink. And at the foot of this hill, toward the plain, is a great well, that entereth into from Jordan.

From that hill to Jericho, that I spake of before, is but a mile in going toward flom Jordan. Also as men go to Jericho sat the blind man crying, *Jesu*, *Fili David*, *miserere mei*; that is to say, 'Jesu, David's Son, have mercy on me.' And anon he had his sight. Also, two mile from Jericho, is flome Jordan. And, an half mile more nigh, is a fair church of Saint John the Baptist, where he baptised our Lord. And there beside is the house of Jeremiah the prophet.

CHAPTER XII

p. 67

Of the Dead Sea; *and of the Flome Jordan*. *Of the Head of Saint John the Baptist*; *and of the Usages of the Samaritans*

And from Jericho, a three mile, is the Dead Sea. About that sea groweth much alum and of alkatran. Between Jericho and that sea is the land of Engeddi. And there was wont to grow the balm; but men make draw the branches thereof and bear them to be grafted at Babylon; and yet men clepe them vines of Geddi. At a coast of that sea, as men go from Arabia, is the mount of the Moabites, where there is a cave, that men clepe Karua. Upon that hill led Balak, the son of Beor, Balaam the priest for to curse the people of Israel.

That Dead Sea parteth the land of Ind and of Arabia, and that sea lasteth from Soara unto Arabia. The water of that sea is full bitter and salt, and, if the earth were made moist and wet with that water, it would never bear fruit. And the earth and the land changeth often his colour. And it casteth out of the water a thing that men clepe asphalt, also great pieces, as the greatness of an horse, every day and on all sides. And from Jerusalem to that sea is 200 furlongs. That sea is in length five hundred and four score furlongs, and in breadth an hundred and fifty furlongs; and it is clept the Dead Sea, for it runneth nought, but is ever unmovable. And neither man, ne beast, ne nothing that beareth life in him ne may not die in that sea. And that hath been proved many times, by men that have deserved to be dead that have been cast therein and left therein three days or four, and they ne might never die therein; for it receiveth no thing within him that beareth life. And no man may drink of the water for bitterness. And if a man cast iron therein, it will float above. And if men cast a feather therein, it will p. 68 sink to the bottom, and these be things against kind.

And also, the cities there were lost because of sin. And there beside grow trees that bear full fair apples, and fair of colour to behold; but whoso breaketh them or cutteth them in two, he shall find within them coals and cinders, in token that by wrath of God the cities and the land were burnt and sunken into hell. Some men clepe that sea the lake Dalfetidee; some, the flome of Devils; and some the flome that is ever stinking. And into that sea sunk the five cities by wrath of God; that is to say, Sodom, Gomorrah, Aldama, Zeboim, and Zoar, for the abominable sin of sodomy that reigned in them. But Zoar, by the prayer of Lot, was saved and kept a great while, for it was set upon a hill; and yet sheweth thereof some part above the water, and men may see the walls when it is fair weather and clear. In that city Lot dwelt a little while; and there was he made drunk of his daughters, and lay with them, and engendered of them Moab and Ammon. And the cause why his daughters made him drunk and for to lie by him was this: because they saw no man about them, but only their father, and

therefore they trowed that God had destroyed all the world as he had done the cities, as he had done before by Noah's flood. And therefore they would lie by with their father for to have issue, and for to replenish the world again with people to restore the world again by them; for they trowed that there had been no more men in all the world; and if their father had not been drunk, he had not lain with them.

And the hill above Zoar men cleped it then Edom and after men cleped it Seir, and after Idumea. Also at the right side of that Dead Sea, dwelleth yet the wife of Lot in likeness of a salt stone; for that she looked behind her when the cities sunk into hell. This Lot was Haran's son, that was brother to Abraham; and Sarah, Abraham's wife, and Milcah, Nahor's wife, were sisters to the said Lot. And the same Sarah was of eld four score and ten year when Isaac her son was gotten on her. And Abraham had another son Ishmael that he gat upon Hagar his chamberer. And when Isaac his son p. 69
was eight days old, Abraham his father let him be circumcised, and Ishmael with him that was fourteen year old: wherefore the Jews that come of Isaac's line be circumcised the eighth day, and the Saracens that come of Ishmael's line be circumcised when they be fourteen year of age.

And ye shall understand, that within the Dead Sea, runneth the flom Jordan, and there it dieth, for it runneth no further more, and that is a place that is a mile from the church of Saint John the Baptist toward the west, a little beneath the place where that Christian men bathe them commonly. And a mile from flom Jordan is the river of Jabbok, the which Jacob passed over when he came from Mesopotamia. This flom Jordan is no great river, but it is plenteous of good fish; and it cometh out of the hill of Lebanon by two wells that be clept Jor and Dan, and of the two wells hath it the name. And it passeth by a lake that is clept Maron. And after it passeth by the sea of Tiberias, and passeth under the hills of Gilboa; and there is a full fair vale, both on that one side and on that other of the same river. And men go [on] the hills of Lebanon, all in length unto the desert of Pharan; and those hills part the kingdom of Syria and the country of Phoenicia; and upon those hills grow trees of cedar that be full high, and they bear long apples, and as great as a man's head.

And also this flom Jordan departeth the land of Galilee and the land of Idumea and the land of Betron, and that runneth under earth a great way unto a fair plain and a great that is clept Meldan in Sarmois; that is to say, Fair or market in their language, because that there is often fairs in that plain. And there becometh the water great and large. In that plain is the tomb of Job.

And in that flom Jordan above-said was our Lord baptised of Saint John, and the voice of God the Father was heard saying: *Hic est Filius meus dilectus*, *etc.*; that is to say, 'This is my beloved Son, in the which I am well pleased; hear him!' and the Holy Ghost alighted upon him in likeness of a culver; and so at his baptising was all the whole Trinity.

And through that flome passed the children of Israel, all dry feet; and they put stones there in the p. 70
middle place, in token of the miracle that the water withdrew him so. Also in that flome Jordan Naaman of Syria bathed him, that was full rich, but he was mesell; and there anon he took his health.

About the flome Jordan be many churches where that many Christian men dwelled. And nigh thereto is the city of Ai that Joshua assailed and took. Also beyond the flome Jordan is the vale of Mamre, and that is a full fair vale. Also upon the hill that I spake of before, where our Lord fasted forty days, a two mile long from Galilee, is a fair hill and an high, where the enemy the fiend bare our Lord the third time to tempt him, and shewed him all the regions of the world and said, *Hec omnia tibi dabo*, *si cadens adoraveris me*; that is to say, 'All this shall I give thee, if thou fall and worship me.'

Also from the Dead Sea to go eastward, out of the marches of the Holy Land that is clept the Land of Promission, is a strong castle and a fair, in an hill that is clept Carak in Sarmois; that is to say, Royally. That castle let make King Baldwin, that was King of France, when he had conquered that land, and put it into Christian men's hands for to keep that country; and for that cause was it clept the Mount Royal. And under it there is a town that hight Sobach, and there, all about, dwell Christian men, under tribute.

From thence go men to Nazareth, of the which our Lord beareth the surname. And from thence there is three journeys to Jerusalem: and men go by the province of Galilee by Ramath, by Sothim and by the high hill of Ephraim, where Elkanah and Hannah the mother of Samuel the prophet dwelled. There was born this prophet; and, after his death, he was buried at Mount Joy, as I have said you before.

And then go men to Shiloh, where the Ark of God with the relics were kept long time under Eli the prophet. There made the people of Hebron sacrifice to our Lord, and they yielded up their vows. And there spake God first to Samuel, and shewed him the mutation of Order of Priesthood, and the mystery of the Sacrament. And right nigh, on the left side, is Gibeon and Ramah and Benjamin, of the which holy writ speaketh of. p. 71

And after men go to Sichem, some-time clept Sichar; and that is in the province of Samaritans. And there is a full fair vale and a fructuous; and there is a fair city and a good that men clepe Neople. And from thence is a journey to Jerusalem. And there is the well, where our Lord spake to the woman of Samaritan. And there was wont to be a church, but it is beaten down. Beside that well King Rehoboam let make two calves of gold and made them to be worshipped, and put that one at Dan and that other at Bethel. And a mile from Sichar is the city of Luz; and in that city dwelt Abraham a certain time. Sichem is a ten mile from Jerusalem, and it is clept Neople; that is for to say, the New City. And nigh beside is the tomb of Joseph the son of Jacob that governed Egypt: for the Jews bare his bones from Egypt and buried them there, and thither go the Jews often-time in pilgrimage with great devotion. In that city was Dinah, Jacob's daughter, ravished, for whom her brethren slew many persons and did many harms to the city. And there beside is the hill of Gerizim, where the Samaritans make their sacrifice: in that hill would Abraham have sacrificed his son Isaac. And there beside is the vale of Dotaim, and there is the cistern, where Joseph, was cast in of his brethren, which they sold; and that is two mile from Sichar.

From thence go men to Samaria that men clepe now Sebast; and that is the chief city of that country, and it sits between the hill of Aygnes as Jerusalem doth. In that city was the sittings of the twelve tribes of Israel; but the city is not now so great as it was wont to be. There was buried Saint John the Baptist between two prophets, Elisha and Abdon; but he was beheaded in the castle of Macharim beside the Dead Sea, and after he was translated of his disciples, and buried at Samaria. And there let Julianus Apostata dig him up and let burn his bones (for he was at that time emperor) and let winnow the ashes in the wind. But the finger that shewed our Lord, saying, *Ecce Agnus Dei*; that is to say, 'Lo! the Lamb of God,' that would never burn, but is all whole;—that finger let Saint Thecla, the holy virgin, be born into the hill of Sebast; and there make men great feast. p. 72

In that place was wont to be a fair church; and many other there were; but they be all beaten down. There was wont to be the head of Saint John Baptist, enclosed in the wall. But the Emperor Theodosius let draw it out, and found it wrapped in a little cloth, all bloody; and so he let it to be born to Constantinople. And yet at Constantinople is the hinder part of the head, and the fore part of the head, till under the chin, is at Rome under the church of Saint Silvester, where be nuns of an hundred orders: and it is yet all broilly, as though it were half-burnt, for the Emperor Julianus above-said, of his cursedness and malice, let burn that part with the other bones, and yet it sheweth; and this thing hath been proved both by popes and by emperors. And the jaws beneath, that hold to the chin, and a part of the ashes and the platter that the head was laid in, when it was smitten off, is at Genoa; and the Genoese make of it great feast, and so do the Saracens also. And some men say that the head of Saint John is at Amiens in Picardy; and other men say that it is the head of Saint John the Bishop. I wot never, but God knoweth; but in what wise that men worship it, the blessed Saint John holds him a-paid.

From this city of Sebast unto Jerusalem is twelve mile. And between the hills of that country there is a well that four sithes in the year changeth his colour, sometime green, sometime red, sometime clear and sometime trouble; and men clepe that well, Job. And the folk of that country, that men clepe Samaritans, were converted and baptized by the apostles; but they hold not well their doctrine, and always they hold laws by themselves, varying from Christian men, from Saracens, Jews and Paynims. And the Samaritans lieve well in one God, and they say well that there is but only one God, that all formed, and all shall doom; and they hold the Bible after the letter, and they use the Psalter as the Jews do. And they say that they be the right sons of God. And among all other folk, they say that they be best beloved of God, and that to them belongeth the heritage that God behight to his beloved children. And they have also diverse clothing and shape to look on than other folk have; for they wrap their heads in red linen cloth, in difference from others. And the Saracens wrap their heads in white linen cloth; and the Christian men, that dwell in the country, wrap them in blue of Ind; and the Jews in yellow cloth. In that country dwell many of the Jews, paying tribute as Christian men do. And if ye will know the letters that the Jews use they be such, and the names be as they clepe them written above, in manner of their A. B. C. p. 73

Aleph	Beth	Gymel	Deleth	He	Vau	Zay	
א	ב	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז	
Heth	Thet	Joht	Kapho	Lampd	Mem	Num	
ח	ט	י	כ	ל	מ	נ	
Sameth	Ey	Fhee	Sade	Coph	Resch	Son	Tau
ס	ע	פ	צ	ק	ר	ש	ת

CHAPTER XIII

Of the Province of Galilee, and where Antichrist shall be born. Of Nazareth. Of the age of Our Lady. Of the Day of Doom. And of the customs of Jacobites, Syrians; and of the usages of Georgians

From this country of the Samaritans that I have spoken of before go men to the plains of Galilee, and men leave the hills on that one part.

And Galilee is one of the provinces of the Holy Land, and in that province is the city of Nain—and Capernaum, and Chorazin and Bethsaida. In this Bethsaida was Saint Peter and Saint Andrew born. p. 74
And thence, a four mile, is Chorazin. And five mile from Chorazin is the city of Kedar whereof the Psalter speaketh: *Et habitavi cum habitantibus Kedar*; that is for to say, 'And I have dwelled with the dwelling men in Kedar.' In Chorazin shall Antichrist be born, as some men say. And other men say he shall be born in Babylon; for the prophet saith: *De Babilonia coluber exest*, *qui totum mundum devorabit*; that is to say 'Out of Babylon shall come a worm that shall devour all the world.' This Antichrist shall be nourished in Bethsaida, and he shall reign in Capernaum: and therefore saith holy writ; *Vae tibi*, *Chorazin*! *Vae tibi*, *Bethsaida*! *Vae tibi*, *Capernaum*! that is to say, 'Woe be to thee, Chorazin! Woe to thee, Bethsaida! Woe to thee, Capernaum.' And all these towns be in the land of Galilee. And also the Cana of Galilee is four mile from Nazareth: of that city was Simon Chananeus and his wife Canee, of the which the holy evangelist speaketh of. There did our Lord the first miracle at the wedding, when he turned water into wine.

And in the end of Galilee, at the hills, was the Ark of God taken; and on that other side is the Mount Endor or Hermon. And, thereabout, goeth the Brook of Torrens Kishon; and there beside, Barak, that was Abimelech's son with Deborah the prophetess overcame the host of Idumea, when Sisera the king was slain of Jael the wife of Heber, and chased beyond the flome Jordan, by strength of sword, Zeeb and Zebah and Zalmunna, and there he slew them. Also a five mile from Nain is the city of Jezreel that sometime was clept Zarim, of the which city Jezabel, the cursed queen, was lady and queen, that took away the vine of Naboth by her strength. Fast by that city is the field Megiddo, in the which the King Joram was slain of the King of Samaria and after was translated and buried in the Mount Sion.

And a mile from Jezreel be the hills of Gilboa, where Saul and Jonathan, that were so fair, died; wherefore David cursed them, as holy writ saith: *Montes Gilboæ*, *nec ros nec pluvia*, *etc.*; that is to say, 'Ye hills of Gilboa, neither dew ne rain come upon you.' And a mile from the hills of Gilboa p. 75
toward the east is the city of Cyropolis, that was clept before Bethshan; and upon the walls of that city was the head of Saul hanged.

After go men by the hill beside the plains of Galilee unto Nazareth, where was wont to be a great city and a fair; but now there is not but a little village, and houses abroad here and there. And it is not walled. And it sits in a little valley, and there be hills all about. There was our Lady born, but she was gotten at Jerusalem. And because that our Lady was born at Nazareth, therefore bare our Lord his surname of that town. There took Joseph our Lady to wife, when she was fourteen year of age. And there Gabriel greeted our Lady, saying, *Ave gratia plena*, *Dominus tecum*! that is to say, 'Hail, full of grace, our Lord is with thee!' And this salutation was done in a place of a great altar of a fair church that was wont to be sometime, but it is now all down, and men have made a little receipt,

beside a pillar of that church, to receive the offerings of pilgrims. And the Saracens keep that place full dearly, for the profit that they have thereof. And they be full wicked Saracens and cruel, and more despiteful than in any other place, and have destroyed all the churches. There nigh is Gabriel's Well, where our Lord was wont to bathe him, when he was young, and from that well bare he water often-time to his mother. And in that well she washed often-time the clouts of her Son Jesu Christ. And from Jerusalem unto thither is three journeys. At Nazareth was our Lord nourished. Nazareth is as much to say as, 'Flower of the garden'; and by good skill may it be clept flower, for there was nourished the flower of life that was Christ Jesu.

And two mile from Nazareth is the city of Sephor, by the way that goeth from Nazareth to Akon. And an half mile from Nazareth is the Leap of our Lord. For the Jews led him upon an high rock for to make him leap down, and have slain him; but Jesu passed amongst them, and leapt upon another rock, and yet be the steps of his feet seen in the rock, where he alighted. And therefore say some men, when they dread them of thieves in any way, or of enemies; *Jesus autem transiens per medium illorum ibat*; that is to say, 'Jesus, forsooth, passing by the midst of them, he went': in token and mind, that our Lord passed through, out the Jews' cruelty, and scaped safely from them, so surely may men pass the peril of thieves'. And then say men two verses of the Psalter three sithes: *Irruat super eos formido & pavor*, *in magnitudine brachii tui*, *Domine*. *Fiant immobiles*, *quasi lapis*, *donec pertranseat populus tuus*, *Domine*; *donec pertranseat populus tuus iste*, *quem possedisti*; and then may men pass without peril. p. 76

And ye shall understand, that our Lady had child when she was fifteen year old. And she was conversant with her son thirty-three year and three months. And after the passion of our Lord she lived twenty-four year.

Also from Nazareth men go to the Mount Tabor; and that is a four mile. And it is a full fair hill and well high, where was wont to be a town and many churches; but they be all destroyed. But yet there is a place that men clepe the school of God, where he was wont to teach his disciples, and told them the privities of heaven. And, at the foot of that hill, Melchisedech that was King of Salem, in the turning of that hill met Abraham in coming again from the battle, when he had slain Abimelech. And this Melchisedech was both king and priest of Salem that now is clept Jerusalem. In that hill Tabor our Lord transfigured him before Saint Peter, Saint John and Saint Jame; and there they saw, ghostly, Moses and Elias the prophets beside them. And therefore said Saint Peter; *Domine*, *bonum est nos hic esse*; *faciamus hic tria tabernacula*; that is to say, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here; make we here three dwelling-places.' And there heard they a voice of the Father that say; *Hic est Filius meus dilectus*, *in quo mihi bene complacui*. And our Lord defended them that they should not tell that avision till that he were risen from death to life.

In that hill and in that same place, at the day of doom, four angels with four trumpets shall blow and raise all men that had suffered death, sith that the world was formed, from death to life; and shall come in body and soul in judgment, before the face of our Lord in the Vale of Jehosaphat. And the doom shall be on Easter Day, such time as our Lord arose. And the doom shall begin, such hour as our Lord descended to hell and despoiled it. For at such hour shall he despoil the world and lead his chosen to bliss; and the other shall he condemn to perpetual pains. And then shall every man have after his desert, either good or evil, but if the mercy of God pass his righteousness. p. 77

Also a mile from Mount Tabor is the Mount Hermon; and there was the city of Nain. Before the gate of that city raised our Lord the widow's son, that had no more children. Also three miles from Nazareth is the Castle Safra, of the which the sons of Zebedee and the sons of Alpheus were. Also a seven mile from Nazareth is the Mount Cain, and under that is a well; and beside that well Lamech, Noah's father, slew Cain with an arrow. For this Cain went through briars and bushes as a wild beast; and he had lived from the time of Adam his father unto the time of Noah, and so he lived nigh to 2000 year. And this Lamech was all blind for eld.

From Safra men go to the sea of Galilee and to the city of Tiberias, that sits upon the same sea. And albeit that men clepe it a sea, yet is it neither sea ne arm of the sea. For it is but a stank of fresh water that is in length one hundred furlongs, and of breadth forty furlongs, and hath within him great plenty of good fish, and runneth into flom Jordan. The city is not full great, but it hath good baths within him.

And there, as the flome Jordan parteth from the sea of Galilee, is a great bridge, where men pass from the Land of Promission to the land of King Bashan and the land of Gennesaret, that be about the flom Jordan and the beginning of the sea of Tiberias. And from thence may men go to Damascus, in three days, by the kingdom of Traconitis, the which kingdom lasteth from Mount Hermon to the sea of Galilee, or to the sea of Tiberias, or to the sea of Gennesaret; and all is one sea, and this the tank that I have told you, but it changeth thus the name for the names of the cities that sit beside him. p. 78

Upon that sea went our Lord dry feet; and there he took up Saint Peter, when he began to drench within the sea, and said to him, *Modice fidei*, *quare dubitasti*? And after his resurrection our Lord appeared on that sea to his disciples and bade them fish, and filled all the net full of great fishes. In that sea rowed our Lord often-time; and there he called to him Saint Peter, Saint Andrew, Saint James and Saint John, the sons of Zebedee.

In that city of Tiberias is the table upon the which our Lord ate upon with his disciples after his resurrection; and they knew him in breaking of bread, as the gospel saith: *Et cognoverunt eum in fractione panis*. And nigh that city of Tiberias is the hill, where our Lord fed 5000 persons with five barley loaves and two fishes.

In that city a man cast a burning dart in wrath after our Lord. And the head smote into the earth and waxed green; and it growed to a great tree. And yet it groweth and the bark thereof is all like coals.

Also in the head of that sea of Galilee, toward the septentrion is a strong castle and an high that hight Saphor. And fast beside it is Capernaum. Within the Land of Promission is not so strong a castle. And there is a good town beneath that is clept also Saphor. In that castle Saint Anne our Lady's mother was born. And there beneath, was Centurio's house. That country is clept the Galilee of Folk that were taken to tribute of Zebulon and Napthali.

And in again coming from that castle, a thirty mile, is the city of Dan, that sometime was clept Belinas or Cesarea Philippi; that sits at the foot of the Mount of Lebanon, where the flome Jordan beginneth. There beginneth the Land of Promission and dureth unto Beersheba in length, in going toward the north into the south, and it containeth well a nine score miles; and of breadth, that is to say, from Jericho unto Jaffa, and that containeth a forty mile of Lombardy, or of our country, that be also little miles; these be not miles of Gascony ne of the province of Almayne, where be great miles. And wit ye well, that the Land of Promission is in Syria. For the realm of Syria dureth from the deserts of Arabia unto Cilicia, and that is Armenia the great; that is to say, from the south to the north. And, from the east to the west, it dureth from the great deserts of Arabia unto the West Sea. But in that realm of Syria is the kingdom of Judea and many other provinces, as Palestine, Galilee, Little Cilicia, and many other. p. 79

In that country and other countries beyond they have a custom, when they shall use war, and when men hold siege about city or castle, and they within dare not send out messengers with letters from lord to lord for to ask succour, they make their letters and bind them to the neck of a culver, and let the culver flee. And the culvers be so taught, that they flee with those letters to the very place that men would send them to. For the culvers be nourished in those places where they be sent to, and they send them thus, for to bear their letters. And the culvers return again whereas they be nourished; and so they do commonly.

And ye shall understand that amongst the Saracens, one part and other, dwell many Christian men of many manners and diverse names. And all be baptized and have diverse laws and diverse customs. But all believe in God the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost; but always fail they in some articles of our faith. Some of these be clept Jacobites, for Saint James converted them and Saint John baptized them. They say that a man shall make his confession only to God, and not to a man; for only to him should man yield him guilty of all that he hath misdone. Ne God ordained not, ne never devised, ne the prophet neither, that a man should shrive him to another (as they say), but only to God. As Moses writeth in the Bible, and as David saith in the Psalter Book; *Confitebor tibi*, *Domine*, *in toto corde meo*, and *Delictum meum tibi cognitum feci*, and *Deus meus es tu*, *& confitebor tibi*, and *Quoniam cogitatio hominis confitebitur tibi*, etc. For they know all the Bible and the Psalter. And therefore allege they so the letter. But they allege not the authorities thus in Latin, but in their language full apertly, and say well, that David and other prophets say it. p. 80

Natheles, Saint Augustine and Saint Gregory say thus:—Augustinus: *Qui scelera sua cogitat*, *& conversus fuerit*, *veniam sibi credat*. Gregorius: *Dominus potius mentem quam verba respicit*. And Saint Hilary saith: *Longorum temporum crimina*, *in ictu oculi pereunt*, *si cordis nata fuerit compunctio*. And for such authorities they say, that only to God shall a man knowledge his defaults, yielding himself guilty and crying him mercy, and behoting to him to amend himself. And therefore, when they will shrive them, they take fire and set it beside them, and cast therein powder of frankincense; and in the smoke thereof they shrive them to God, and cry him mercy. But sooth it is, that this confession was first and kindly. But Saint Peter the apostle, and they that came after him, have ordained to make their confession to man, and by good reason; for they perceived well that no sickness was curable, [ne] good medicine to lay thereto, but if men knew the nature of the malady; and also no man may give convenable medicine, but if he know the quality of the deed. For one sin may be greater in one man than in another, and in one place and in one time than in another; and therefore it behoveth him that he know the kind of the deed, and thereupon to give him penance.

There be other, that be clept Syrians; and they hold the belief amongst us, and of them of Greece. And they use all beards, as men of Greece do. And they make the sacrament of therf bread. And in their language they use letters of Saracens. But after the mystery of Holy Church they use letters of Greece. And they make their confession, right as the Jacobites do.

There be other, that men clepe Georgians, that Saint George converted; and him they worship more than any other saint, and to him they cry for help. And they came out of the realm of Georgia. These folk use crowns shaven. The clerks have round crowns, and the lewd men have crowns all square. And they hold Christian law, as do they of Greece; of whom I have spoken of before.

Other there be that men clepe Christian men of Girding, for they be all girt above. And there be other p. 81
that men clept Nestorians. And some Arians, some Nubians, some of Greece, some of Ind, and some of Prester John's Land. And all these have many articles of our faith, and to other they be variant. And of their variance were too long to tell, and so I will leave, as for the time, without more speaking of them.

CHAPTER XIV

Of the City of Damascus. *Of three ways to Jerusalem*; *one*, *by land and by sea*; *another*, *more by land than by sea*; *and the third way to Jerusalem*, *all by land*

Now after that I have told you some part of folk in the countries before, now will I turn again to my way, for to turn again on this half. Then whoso will go from the land of Galilee, of that that I have spoke for, to come again on this half, men come again by Damascus, that is a full fair city and full noble, and full of all merchandises, and a three journeys long from the sea, and a five journeys from Jerusalem. But upon camels, mules, horses, dromedaries and other beasts, men carry their merchandise thither. And thither come the merchants with merchandise by sea from India, Persia, Chaldea, Armenia, and of many other kingdoms.

This city founded Eliezer Damascus, that was yeoman and dispenser of Abraham before that Isaac was born. For he thought for to have been Abraham's heir, and he named the town after his surname Damascus. And in that place, where Damascus was founded, Cain slew Abel his brother. And beside Damascus is the Mount Seir. In that city of Damascus there is great plenty of wells. And within the city and without be many fair gardens and of diverse fruits. None other city is not like in comparison to it of fair gardens, and of fair disports. The city is great and full of people, and well walled with p. 82
double walls. And there be many physicians. And Saint Paul himself was there a physician for to keep men's bodies in health, before he was converted. And after that he was physician of souls. And Saint Luke the evangelist was disciple of Saint Paul for to learn physic, and many other; for Saint Paul held then school of physic. And near beside Damascus was he converted. And after his conversion ne dwelt in that city three days, without sight and without meat or drink; and in those three days he was ravished to heaven, and there he saw many privities of our Lord.

And fast beside Damascus is the castle of Arkes that is both fair and strong.

From Damascus men come again by our Lady of Sardenak, that is a five mile on this half Damascus. And it sitteth upon a rock, and it is a full fair place; and it seemeth a castle, for there was wont to be a castle, but it is now a full fair church. And there within be monks and nuns Christian. And there is a vault under the church, where that Christian men dwell also. And they have many good vines. And in the church, behind the high altar, in the wall, is a table of black wood, on the which sometime was depainted an image of our Lady that turneth into flesh: but now the image sheweth but little, but alway, by the grace of God, that table evermore drops oil, as it were of olive; and there is a vessel of marble under the table to receive the oil. Thereof they give to pilgrims, for it heals of many sicknesses; and men say that, if it be kept well seven year, afterwards it turns into flesh and blood. From Sardenak men come through the vale of Bochar, the which is a fair vale and a plenteous of all manner of fruit; and it is amongst hills. And there are therein fair rivers and great meadows and noble pasture for beasts. And men go by the mounts of Libanus, which lasts from Armenia the more towards the north unto Dan, the which is the end of the Land of Repromission toward the north, as I said before. Their hills are right fruitful, and there are many fair wells and cedars and cypresses, and many other trees of divers kinds. There are also many good towns toward the head of their hills, full of folk. p. 83

Between the city of Arkez and the city of Raphane is a river, that is called Sabatory; for on the Saturday it runs fast, and all the week else it stand still and runs not, or else but fairly. Between the foresaid hills also is another water that on nights freezes hard and on days is no frost seen thereon. And, as men come again from those hills, is a hill higher than any of the other, and they call it there the High Hill. There is a great city and a fair, the which is called Tripoli, in the which are many good Christian men, yemand the same rites and customs that we use. From thence men come by a city that is called Beyrout, where Saint George slew the dragon; and it is a good town, and a fair castle therein, and it is three journeys from the foresaid city of Sardenak. At the one side of Beyrout sixteen mile, to come hitherward, is the city of Sydon. At Beyrout enters pilgrims into the sea that will come to Cyprus, and they arrive at the port of Surry or of Tyre, and so they come to Cyprus in a little space. Or men may come from the port of Tyre and come not at Cyprus, and arrive at some haven of Greece, and so come to these parts, as I said before.

I have told you now of the way by which men go farrest and longest to Jerusalem, as by Babylon and Mount Sinai and many other places which ye heard me tell of; and also by which ways men shall turn again to the Land of Repromission. Now will I tell you the rightest way and the shortest to Jerusalem. For some men will not go the other; some for they have not spending enough, some for they have no good company, and some for they may not endure the long travel, some for they dread them of many perils of deserts, some for they will haste them homeward, desiring to see their wives and their children, or for some other reasonable cause that they have to turn soon home. And therefore I will shew how men may pass tittest and in shortest time make their pilgrimage to Jerusalem. A man that comes from the lands of the west, he goes through France, Burgoyne, and Lumbardy. And so to Venice or Genoa, or some other haven, and ships there and wends by sea to the isle of Greff, the which pertains to the Genoans. p. 84

And syne he arrives in Greece at Port Mirrok, or at Valoun, or at Duras, or at some other haven of that country, and rests him there and buys him victuals and ships again and sails to Cyprus and arrives there at Famagost and comes not at the isle of Rhodes. Famagost is the chief haven of Cyprus; and there he refreshes him and purveys him of victuals, and then he goes to ship and comes no more on land, if he will, before he comes at Port Jaffa, that is the next haven to Jerusalem, for it is but a day journey and a half from Jerusalem, that is to say thirty-six mile. From the Port Jaffa men go to the city of Rames, the which is but a little thence; and it is a fair city and a good and mickle folk therein. And without that city toward the south is a kirk of our Lady, where our Lord shewed him to her in three clouds, the which betokened the Trinity. And a little thence is another city, that men call Dispolis, but it hight some time Lidda, a fair city and a well inhabited: there is a kirk of Saint George, where he was headed. From thence men go to the castle of Emmaus, and so to the Mount Joy; there may pilgrims first see Jerusalem. At Mount Joy lies Samuel the prophet. From thence men go to Jerusalem. Beside their ways is the city of Ramatha and the Mount Modyn; and thereof was Matathias, Judas Machabeus father, and there are the graves of the Machabees. Beyond Ramatha is the town of Tekoa, whereof Amos the prophet was; and there is his grave.

I have told you before of the holy places that are at Jerusalem and about it, and therefore I will speak no more of them at this time. But I will turn again and shew you other ways a man may pass more by land, and namely for them that may not suffer the savour of the sea, but is liefer to go by land, if all it be the more pain. From a man be entered into the sea he shall pass till one of the havens of Lumbardy, for there is the best making of purveyance of victuals; or he may pass to Genoa or Venice or some other. And he shall pass by sea in to Greece to the Port Mirrok, or to Valoun or to Duras, or p. 85
some other haven of that country. And from thence he shall go by land to Constantinople, and he shall pass the water that is called Brace Saint George, the which is one arm of the sea. And from thence he shall by land go to Ruffynell, where a good castle is and a strong; and from therein he shall go to Puluual, and syne to the castle of Sinope, and from thence to Cappadocia, that is a great country, where are many great hills. And he shall go though Turkey to the port of Chiutok and to the city of Nicæa, which is but seven miles thence. That city won the Turks from the Emperor of Constantinople; and it is a fair city and well walled on the one side, and on the other side is a great lake and a great river, the which is called Lay. From thence men go by the hills of Nairmount and by the vales of Mailbrins and strait fells and by the town of Ormanx or by the towns that are on Riclay and Stancon, the which are great rivers and noble, and so to Antioch the less, which is set on the river of Riclay. And there abouts are many good hills and fair, and many fair woods and great plenty of wild beasts for to hunt at.

And he that will go another way, he shall go by the plains of Romany coasting the Roman Sea. On that coast is a fair castle that men call Florach, and it is right a strong place. And uppermore amongst the mountains is a fair city, that is called Tarsus, and the city of Longemaath, and the city of Assere, and the city of Marmistre. And when a man is passed those mountains and those fells, he goes by the city of Marioch and by Artoise, where is a great bridge upon the river of Ferne, that is called Farfar, and it is a great river bearing ships and it runs right fast out of the mountains to the city of Damascus. And beside the city of Damascus is another great river that comes from the hills of Liban, which men call Abbana. At the passing of this river Saint Eustace, that some-time was called Placidas, lost his wife and his two children. This river runs through the plain of Archades, and so to the Red Sea. From thence men go to the city of Phenice, where are hot wells and hot baths. And then men go to p. 86
the city of Ferne; and between Phenice and Ferne are ten mile. And there are many fair woods. And then men come to Antioch, which is ten mile thence. And it is a fair city and well walled about with many fair towers; and it is a great city, but it was some-time greater than it is now. For it was some-time two mile on length and on breadth other half mile. And through the midst of that city ran the water of Farphar and a great bridge over it; and there was some-time in the walls about this city three hundred and fifty towers, and at each pillar of the bridge was a stone. This is the chief city of the kingdom of Syria. And ten mile from this city is the port of Saint Symeon; and there goes the water of Farphar into the sea. From Antioch men go to a city that is called Lacuth, and then to Gebel, and then to Tortouse. And there near is the land of Channel; and there is a strong castle that is called Maubek. From Tortouse pass men to Tripoli by sea, or else by land through the straits of mountains and fells. And there is a city that is called Gibilet. From Tripoli go men to Acres; and from thence are two ways to Jerusalem, the one on the left half and the other on the right half. By the left way men go by Damascus and by the flum Jordan. By the right way men go by Maryn and by the land of Flagramy and near the mountains into the city of Cayphas, that some men call the castle of Pilgrims. And from thence to Jerusalem are three day journey, in the which men shall go through Caesarea Philippi, and so to Jaffa and Rames and the castle of Emmaus, and so to Jerusalem.

Now have I told you some ways by land and by water that men may go by to the Holy Land after the countries that they come from. Nevertheless they come all to one end. Yet is there another way to Jerusalem all by land, and pass not the sea, from France or Flanders; but that way is full long and perilous and of great travel, and therefore few go that way. He that shall go that way, he shall go through Almayne and Prussia and so to Tartary. This Tartary is holden of the great Caan of Cathay, of whom I think to speak afterward. This is a full ill land and sandy and little fruit bearing. For there p. 87
grows no corn, ne wine, ne beans, ne peas, ne none other fruit convenable to man for to live with. But there are beasts in great plenty: and therefore they eat but flesh without bread and sup the broth and they drink milk of all manner of beasts. They eat hounds, cats, ratons, and all other wild beasts. And they have no wood, or else little; and therefore they warm and seethe their meat with horse-dung and cow-dung and of other beasts, dried against the sun. And princes and other eat not but once in the day, and that but little. And they be right foul folk and of evil kind. And in summer, by all the countries, fall many tempests and many hideous thunders and leits and slay much people and beasts

also full often-time. And suddenly is there passing heat, and suddenly also passing cold; and it is the foulest country and the most cursed and the poorest that men know. And their prince, that governeth that country, that they clepe Batho, dwelleth at the city of Orda. And truly no good man should not dwell in that country, for the land and the country is not worthy hounds to dwell in. It were a good country to sow in thistle and briars and broom and thorns and briars; and for no other thing is it not good. Natheles, there is good land in some place, but it is pure little, as men say.

I have not been in that country, nor by those ways. But I have been at other lands that march to those countries, as in the land of Russia, as in the land of Nyflan, and in the realm of Cracow and of Letto, and in the realm of Daristan, and in many other places that march to the coasts. But I went never by that way to Jerusalem, wherefore I may not well tell you the manner.

But, if this matter please to any worthy man that hath gone by that way, he may tell it if him like, to that intent, that those, that will go by that way and make their voyage by those coasts, may know what way is there. For no man may pass by that way goodly, but in time of winter, for the perilous waters and wicked mareys, that be in those countries, that no man may pass but if it be strong frost and snow above. For if the snow ne were not, men might not go upon the ice, ne horse ne car neither. p. 88

And it is well a three journeys of such way to pass from Prussia to the land of Saracens habitable. And it behoveth to the Christian men, that shall war against them every year, to bear their victuals with them; for they shall find there no good. And then must they let carry their victual upon the ice with cars that have no wheels, that they clepe sleighs. And as long as their victuals last they may abide there, but no longer; for there shall they find no wight that will sell them any victual or anything. And when the spies see any Christian men come upon them, they run to the towns, and cry with a loud voice; *Kerra*, *Kerra*, *Kerra*. And then anon they arm them and assemble them together.

And ye shall understand that it freezeth more strongly in those countries than on this half. And therefore hath every man stews in his house, and in those stews they eat and do their occupations all that they may. For that is at the north parts that men clepe the Septentrional where it is all only cold. For the sun is but little or none toward those countries. And therefore in the Septentrion, that is very north, is the land so cold, that no man may dwell there. And, in the contrary, toward the south it is so hot, that no man ne may dwell there, because that the sun, when he is upon the south, casteth his beams all straight upon that part.

CHAPTER XV

Of the Customs of Saracens, *and of their Law*. *And how the Soldan reasoned me*, *Author of this Book*; *and of the beginning of Mohammet*

Now, because that I have spoken of Saracens and of their country—now, if ye will know a part of their law and of their belief, I shall tell you after that their book that is clept *Alkaron* telleth. And some men clepe that book *Meshaf*. And some men clepe it *Harme*, after the diverse languages of the country. The which book Mohammet took them. In the which book, among other things, is written, as I have often-time seen and read, that the good shall go to paradise, and the evil to hell; and that believe all Saracens. And if a man ask them what paradise they mean, they say, to paradise that is a place of delights where men shall find all manner of fruits in all seasons, and rivers running of milk and honey, and of wine and of sweet water; and that they shall have fair houses and noble, every man after his desert, made of precious stones and of gold and of silver; and that every man shall have four score wives all maidens, and he shall have ado every day with them, and yet he shall find them always maidens. p. 89

Also they believe and speak gladly of the Virgin Mary and of the Incarnation. And they say that Mary was taught of the angel; and that Gabriel said to her, that she was for-chosen from the beginning of the world and that he shewed to her the Incarnation of Jesu Christ and that she conceived and bare child maiden; and that witnesseth their book.

And they say also, that Jesu Christ spake as soon as he was born; and that he was an holy prophet and a true in word and deed, and meek and piteous and rightful and without any vice.

And they say also, that when the angel shewed the Incarnation of Christ unto Mary, she was young and had great dread. For there was then an enchanter in the country that dealt with witchcraft, that men clept Taknia, that by his enchantments could make him in likeness of an angel, and went often-times and lay with maidens. And therefore Mary dreaded lest it had been Taknia, that came for to deceive the maidens. And therefore she conjured the angel, that he should tell her if it were he or no. And the angel answered and said that she should have no dread of him, for he was very messenger of Jesu Christ. Also their book saith, that when that she had childed under a palm tree she had great shame, that she had a child; and she greet and said that she would that she had been dead. And anon p. 90
the child spake to her and comforted her, and said, "Mother, ne dismay thee nought, for God hath hid in thee his privities for the salvation of the world." And in other many places saith their *Alkaron*, that Jesu Christ spake as soon as he was born. And that book saith also that Jesu was sent from God Almighty for to be mirror and example and token to all men.

And the *Alkaron* saith also of the day of doom how God shall come to doom all manner of folk. And the good he shall draw on his side and put them into bliss, and the wicked he shall condemn to the pains of hell. And among all prophets Jesu was the most excellent and the most worthy next God, and that he made the gospels in the which is good doctrine and healthful, full of clarity and soothfastness and true preaching to them that believe in God. And that he was a very prophet and more than a prophet, and lived without sin, and gave sight to the blind, and healed the lepers, and raised dead men, and styed to heaven.

And when they may hold the Book of the Gospels of our Lord written and namely *Missus est Angelus Gabriel*, that gospel they say, those that be lettered, often-times in their orisons, and they kiss it and worship it with great devotion.

They fast an whole month in the year and eat nought but by night. And they keep them from their wives all that month. But the sick men be not constrained to that fast.

Also this book speaketh of Jews and saith that they be cursed; for they would not believe that Jesu Christ was come of God. And that they lied falsely on Mary and on her son Jesu Christ, saying that they had crucified Jesu the son of Mary; for he was never crucified, as they say, but that God made him to sty up to him without death and without annoy. But he transfigured his likeness into Judas Iscariot, and him crucified the Jews, and weened that it had been Jesus. But Jesus styed to heavens all quick. And therefore they say, that the Christian men err and have no good knowledge of this, and that they believe folily and falsely that Jesu Christ was crucified. And they say yet, that and he had p. 91
been crucified, that God had done against his righteousness for to suffer Jesu Christ, that was innocent, to be put upon the cross without guilt. And in this article they say that we fail and that the great righteousness of God might not suffer so great a wrong: and in this faileth their faith. For they knowledge well, that the works of Jesu Christ be good, and his words and his deeds and his doctrine by his gospels were true, and his miracles also true; and the blessed Virgin Mary is good, and holy maiden before and after the birth of Jesu Christ; and that all those that believe perfectly in God shall be saved. And because that they go so nigh our faith, they be lightly converted to Christian law when men preach them and shew them distinctly the law of Jesu Christ, and when they tell them of the prophecies.

And also they say, that they know well by the prophecies that the law of Mahomet shall fail, as the law of the Jews did; and that the law of Christian people shall last to the day of doom. And if any man ask them what is their belief, they answer thus, and in this form: "We believe God, former of heaven and of earth, and of all other things that he made. And without him is nothing made. And we believe of the day of doom, and that every man shall have his merit, after he hath deserved. And, we believe it for sooth, all that God hath said by the mouths of his prophets."

Also Mahomet commanded in his *Alkaron*, that every man should have two wives, or three or four; but now they take unto nine, and of lemans as many as he may sustain. And if any of their wives mis-bear them against their husband, he may cast her out of his house, and depart from her and take another; but he shall depart with her his goods.

Also, when men speak to them of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, they say, that they be three persons, but not one God; for their *Alkaron* speaketh not of the Trinity. But they say well, that God hath speech, and else were he dumb. And God hath also a spirit they know well, for else they say, he were not alive. And when men speak to them of the Incarnation how that by the word of p. 92
the angel God sent his wisdom in to earth and enombred him in the Virgin Mary, and by the word of God shall the dead be raised at the day of doom, they say, that it is sooth and that the word of God hath great strength. And they say that whoso knew not the word of God he should not know God. And they say also that Jesu Christ is the word of God: and so saith their *Alkaron*, where it saith that the angel spake to Mary and said: "Mary, God shall preach thee the gospel by the word of his mouth and his name shall be clept Jesu Christ."

And they say also, that Abraham was friend to God, and that Moses was familiar speaker with God, and Jesu Christ was the word and the spirit of God, and that Mohammet was right messenger of God. And they say, that of these four, Jesu was the most worthy and the most excellent and the most great. So that they have many good articles of our faith, albeit that they have no perfect law and faith as Christian men have; and therefore be they lightly converted, and namely those that understand the scriptures and the prophecies. For they have the gospels and the prophecies and the Bible written in their language; wherefore they ken much of holy writ, but they understand it not but after the letter. And so do the Jews, for they understand not the letter ghostly, but bodily; and therefore be they reproved of the wise, that ghostly understand it. And therefore saith Saint Paul: *Litera occidit*; *spiritus autem vivificat*. Also the Saracens say, that the Jews be cursed; for they have befouled the law that God sent them by Moses: and the Christian be cursed also, as they say; for they keep not the commandments and the precepts of the gospel that Jesu Christ taught them.

And, therefore, I shall tell you what the soldan told me upon a day in his chamber. He let void out of his chamber all manner of men, lords and others, for he would speak with me in counsel. And there he asked me how the Christian men governed them in our country. And I said him, "Right well, thanked be God!"

And he said me, "Truly nay! For ye Christian ne reck right nought, how untruly to serve God! Ye p. 93
should give ensample to the lewd people for to do well, and ye give them ensample to do evil. For the commons, upon festival days, when they should go to church to serve God, then go they to taverns, and be there in gluttony all the day and all night, and eat and drink as beasts that have no reason, and wit not when they have enough. And also the Christian men enforce themselves in all manners that they may, for to fight and for to deceive that one that other. And therewithal they be so proud, that they know not how to be clothed; now long, now short, now strait, now large, now sworded, now daggered, and in all manner guises. They should be simple, meek and true, and full of alms-deeds, as Jesu was, in whom they trow; but they be all the contrary, and ever inclined to the evil, and to do evil. And they be so covetous, that, for a little silver, they sell their daughters, their sisters and their own wives to put them to lechery. And one withdraweth the wife of another, and none of them holdeth faith to another; but they defoul their law that Jesu Christ betook them to keep for their salvation. And thus, for their sins, have they lost all this land that we hold. For, for their sins, their God hath taken them into our hands, not only by strength of ourself, but for their sins. For we know well, in very sooth, that when ye serve God, God will help you; and when he is with you, no man may be against you. And that know we well by our prophecies, that Christian men shall win again this land out of our hands, when they serve God more devoutly; but as long as they be of foul and of unclean living (as they be now) we have no dread of them in no kind, for their God will not help them in no wise."

And then I asked him, how he knew the state of Christian men. And he answered me, that he knew all the state of all courts of Christian kings and princes and the state of the commons also by his messengers that he sent to all lands, in manner as they were merchants of precious stones, of cloths of gold and of other things, for to know the manner of every country amongst Christian men. And then p. 94
he let clepe in all the lords that he made void first out of his chamber, and there he shewed me four that were great lords in the country, that told me of my country and of many other Christian countries, as well as they had been of the same country; and they spake French right well, and the soldan also; whereof I had great marvel.

Alas! that it is great slander to our faith and to our law, when folk that be without law shall reprove us and undernim us of our sins, and they that should be converted to Christ and to the law of Jesu by our

good ensamples and by our acceptable life to God, and so converted to the law of Jesu Christ, be, through our wickedness and evil living, far from us and strangers from the holy and very belief, shall thus appeal us and hold us for wicked livers and cursed. And truly they say sooth, for the Saracens be good and faithful; for they keep entirely the commandment of the holy book *Alkaron* that God sent them by his messenger Mahomet, to the which, as they say, Saint Gabriel the angel oftentime told the will of God.

And ye shall understand, that Mahomet was born in Arabia, that was first a poor knave that kept camels, that went with merchants for merchandise. And so befell, that he went with the merchants into Egypt; and they were then Christian in those parts. And at the deserts of Arabia, he went into a chapel where a hermit dwelt. And when he entered into the chapel that was but a little and a low thing and had but a little door and a low, then the entry began to wax so great, and so large and so high as though it had been of a great minster or the gate of a palace. And this was the first miracle, the Saracens say, that Mahomet did in his youth.

After began he for to wax wise and rich. And he was a great astronomer. And after, he was governor and prince of the land of Cozrodane; and he governed it full wisely, in such manner, that when the prince was dead, he took the lady to wife that hight Gadrige. And Mahomet fell often in the great sickness that men call the falling evil; wherefore the lady was full sorry that ever she took him to husband. But Mahomet made her to believe, that all times, when he fell so, Gabriel the angel came p. 95
for to speak with him, and for the great light and brightness of the angel he might not sustain him from falling; and therefore the Saracens say, that Gabriel came often to speak with him.

This Mahomet reigned in Arabia, the year of our Lord Jesu Christ 610, and was of the generation of Ishmael that was Abraham's son, that he gat upon Hagar his chamberer. And therefore there be Saracens that be clept Ishmaelites; and some Hagarenes, of Hagar. And the other properly be clept Saracens, of Sarah. And some be clept Moabites and some Ammonites, for the two sons of Lot, Moab and Ammon, that he begat on his daughters that were afterward great earthly princes.

And also Mahomet loved well a good hermit that dwelled in the deserts a mile from Mount Sinai, in the way that men go from Arabia toward Chaldea and toward Ind, one day's journey from the sea, where the merchants of Venice come often for merchandise. And so often went Mahomet to this hermit, that all his men were wroth; for he would gladly hear this hermit preach and make his men wake all night. And therefore his men thought to put the hermit to death. And so it befell upon a night, that Mahomet was drunken of good wine, and he fell on sleep. And his men took Mahomet's sword out of his sheath, whiles he slept, and therewith they slew this hermit, and put his sword all bloody in his sheath again. And at morrow, when he found the hermit dead, he was full sorry and wroth, and would have done his men to death. But they all, with one accord, said that he himself had slain him, when he was drunken, and shewed him his sword all bloody. And he trowed that they had said sooth. And then he cursed the wine and all those that drink it. And therefore Saracens that be devout drink never no wine. But some drink it privily; for if they drunk it openly, they should be reproved. But they drink good beverage and sweet and nourishing that is made of gallamelle and that is that men make sugar of, that is of right good savour, and it is good for the breast.

Also it befalleth some-time, that Christian men become Saracens, either for poverty or for p. 96
simpleness, or else for their own wickedness. And therefore the archflamen or the flamen, as our archbishop or bishop, when he receiveth them saith thus: *La ellec olla Sila*, *Machomete rores alla*; that is to say, 'There is no God but one, and Mahomet his messenger.'

Now I have told you a part of their law and of their customs, I shall say you of their letters that they have, with their names and the manner of their figures what they be: Almoy, Bethath, Cathi, Ephoti, Delphoi, Fothi, Garothi, Hechum, Iotty, Kaythi, Lothum, Malach, Nabaloth, Orthi, Chesiri, ȝoch, Ruth, Holath, Routhi, Salathi, Thatimus, Yrthom, Aȝaȝoth, Arrocchi, ȝotipyn, Ichetus. And these be the names of their a. b. c. Now shall ye know the figures. . . . And four letters they have more than other for diversity of their language and speech, forasmuch as they speak in their throats; and we in England have in our language and speech two letters more than they have in their a. b. c.; and that is Þ and ȝ, which be clept thorn and ȝogh.

CHAPTER XVI

Of the lands of Albania and of Libia. Of the wishings for watching of the Sparrow-hawk; and of Noah's ship

Now, sith I have told you before of the Holy Land and of that country about, and of many ways for to go to that land and to the Mount Sinai, and of Babylon the more and the less, and to other places that I have spoken before, now is time, if it like you, for to tell you of the marches and isles and diverse beasts, and of diverse folk beyond these marches.

For in those countries beyond be many diverse countries and many great kingdoms, that be departed by the four floods that come from paradise terrestrial. For Mesopotamia and the kingdom of Chaldea and Arabia be between the two rivers of Tigris and of Euphrates; and the kingdom of Media and of p. 97
Persia be between the rivers of Nile and of Tigris; and the kingdom of Syria, whereof I have spoken before, and Palestine and Phoenicia be between Euphrates and the sea Mediterranean, the which sea dureth in length from Morocco, upon the sea of Spain, unto the Great Sea, so that it lasteth beyond Constantinople 3040 miles of Lombardy.

And toward the sea Ocean in Ind is the kingdom of Scythia, that is all closed with hills. And after, under Scythia, and from the sea of Caspian unto the flom of Thainy, is Amazonia, that is the land of feminye, where that no man is, but only all women. And after is Albania, a full great realm; and it is clept Albania, because that the folk be whiter there than in other marches there-about: and in that country be so great hounds and so strong, that they assail lions and slay them. And then after is Hircania, Bactria, Hiberia and many other kingdoms.

And between the Red Sea and the sea Ocean, toward the south is the kingdom of Ethiopia and of Lybia the higher, the which land of Lybia (that is to say, Lybia the low) that beginneth at the sea of Spain from thence where the pillars of Hercules be, and endureth unto anent Egypt and toward Ethiopia. In that country of Lybia is the sea more high than the land, and it seemeth that it would cover the earth, and natheles yet it passeth not his marks. And men see in that country a mountain to the which no man cometh. In this land of Lybia whoso turneth toward the east, the shadow of himself is on the right side; and here, in our country, the shadow is on the left side. In that sea of Lybia is no fish; for they may not live ne dure for the great heat of the sun, because that the water is evermore boiling for the great heat. And many other lands there be that it were too long to tell or to number. But of some parts I shall speak more plainly hereafter.

Whoso will then go toward Tartary, toward Persia, toward Chaldea and toward Ind, he must enter the sea at Genoa or at Venice or at some other haven that I have told you before. And then pass men the sea and arrive at Trebizond that is a good city; and it was wont to be the haven of Pontus. There is p. 98
the haven of Persians and of Medians and of the marches there beyond. In that city lieth Saint Athanasius that was bishop of Alexandria, that made the psalm *Quicunque vult*.

This Athanasius was a great doctor of divinity. And, because that he preached and spake so deeply of divinity and of the Godhead, he was accused to the Pope of Rome that he was an heretic. Wherefore the Pope sent after him and put him in prison. And whiles he was in prison he made that psalm and sent it to the Pope, and said, that if he were an heretic, then was that heresy, for that, he said, was his belief. And when the Pope saw it, and had examined it that it was perfect and good, and verily our faith and our belief, he made him to be delivered out of prison, and commanded that psalm to be said every day at prime; and so he held Athanasius a good man. But he would never go to his bishopric again, because that they accused him of heresy.

Trebizond was wont to be holden of the Emperor of Constantinople; but a great man, that he sent for to keep the country against the Turks, usurped the land and held it to himself, and cleped him Emperor of Trebizond.

And from thence men go through Little Armenia. And in that country is an old castle that stands upon a rock; the which is clept the castle of the Sparrow-hawk, that is beyond the city of Layays beside the town of Pharsipee, that belongeth to the lordship of Cruk, that is a rich lord and a good Christian man; where men find a sparrow-hawk upon a perch right fair and right well made, and a fair

lady of faerie that keepeth it. And who that will watch that sparrow-hawk seven days and seven nights, and, as some men say, three days and three nights, without company and without sleep, that fair lady shall give him, when he hath done, the first wish that he will wish of earthly things; and that hath been proved often-times.

And one time befell, that a King of Armenia, that was a worthy knight and doughty man, and a noble princes watched that hawk some time. And at the end of seven days and seven nights the lady came to him and bade him wish, for he had well deserved it. And he answered that he was great lord enough, and well in peace, and had enough of worldly riches; and therefore he would wish none other thing, but the body of that fair lady, to have it at his will. And she answered him, that he knew not what he asked, and said that he was a fool to desire that he might not have; for she said that he should not ask but earthly thing, for she was none earthly thing, but a ghostly thing. And the king said that he ne would ask none other thing. And the lady answered; "Sith that I may not withdraw you from your lewd corage, I shall give you without wishing, and to all them that shall come of you. Sir king! ye shall have war without peace, and always to the nine degree, ye shall be in subjection of your enemies, and ye shall be needy of all goods." And never since, neither the King of Armenia nor the country were never in peace; ne they had never sith plenty of goods; and they have been sithen always under tribute of the Saracens. p. 99

Also the son of a poor man watched that hawk and wished that he might chieve well, and to be happy to merchandise. And the lady granted him. And he became the most rich and the most famous merchant that might be on sea or on earth. And he became so rich that he knew not the thousand part of that he had. And he was wiser in wishing than was the king.

Also a knight of the Temple watched there, and wished a purse evermore full of gold. And the lady granted him. But she said him that he had asked the destruction of their order for the trust and the affiance of that purse, and for the great pride that they should have. And so it was. And therefore look he keep him well, that shall wake. For if he sleep he is lost, that never man shall see him more.

This is not the right way for to go to the parts that I have named before, but for to see the marvel that I have spoken of. And therefore whoso will go right way, men go from Trebizond toward Armenia the Great unto a city that is clept Erzeroum, that was wont to be a good city and a plenteous; but the Turks have greatly wasted it. There-about groweth no wine nor fruit, but little or else none. In this land is the earth more high than in any other, and that maketh great cold. And there be many good waters and good wells that come under earth from the flom of Paradise, that is clept Euphrates, that is a journey beside that city; and that river cometh towards Ind under earth, and resorteth into the land of Altazar. And so pass men by this Armenia and enter the sea of Persia. p. 100

From that city of Erzeroum go men to an hill that is clept Sabissocolle. And there beside is another hill that men clepe Ararat, but the Jews clepe it Taneez, where Noah's ship rested, and yet is upon that mountain. And men may see it afar in clear weather. And that mountain is well a seven mile high. And some men say that they have seen and touched the ship, and put their fingers in the parts where the fiend went out, when that Noah said, *Benedicite*. But they that say such words, say their will. For a man may not go up the mountain, for great plenty of snow that is always on that mountain, neither summer nor winter. So that no man may go up there, ne never man did, since the time of Noah, save a monk that, by the grace of God, brought one of the planks down, that yet is in the minster at the foot of the mountain.

And beside is the city of Dain that Noah founded. And fast by is the city of Any in the which were wont to be a thousand churches.

But upon that mountain to go up, this monk had great desire. And so upon a day, he went up. And when he was upward the three part of the mountain he was so weary that he might no further, and so he rested him, and fell asleep. And when he awoke he found himself lying at the foot of the mountain. And then he prayed devoutly to God that he would vouchsafe to suffer him go up. And an angel came to him, and said that he should go up. And so he did. And sith that time never none. Wherefore men should not believe such words.

From that mountain go men to the city of Thauriso that was wont to be clept Taxis, that is a full fair city and a great, and one of the best that is in the world for merchandise; thither come all merchants for to buy avoirdupois, and it is in the land of the Emperor of Persia. And men say that the emperor p. 101

taketh more good in that city for custom of merchandise than doth the richest Christian king of all his realm that liveth. For the toll and the custom of his merchants is without estimation to be numbered. Beside that city is a hill of salt, and of that salt every man taketh what he will for to salt with, to his need. There dwell many Christian men under tribute of Saracens. And from that city, men pass by many towns and castles in going toward Ind unto the city of Sadonia, that is a ten journeys from Thauriso, and it is a full noble city and a great. And there dwelleth the Emperor of Persia in summer; for the country is cold enough. And there be good rivers bearing ships.

After go men the way toward Ind by many journeys, and by many countries, unto the city that is clept Cassak, and that is a full noble city, and a plenteous of corns and wines and of all other goods. This is the city where the three kings met together when they went to seek our Lord in Bethlehem to worship him and to present him with gold, incense, and myrrh. And it is from that city to Bethlehem fifty-three journeys. From that city men go to another city that is clept Gethe, that is a journey from the sea that men clepe the Gravelly Sea. That is the best city that the Emperor of Persia hath in all his land. And they clepe flesh there Dabago and the wine Vapa. And the Paynims say that no Christian man may not long dwell ne endure with the life in that city, but die within short time; and no man knoweth not the cause.

After go men by many cities and towns and great countries that it were too long to tell unto the city of Cornaa that was wont to be so great that the walls about hold twenty-five mile about. The walls shew yet, but it is not all inhabited. From Cornaa go men by many lands and many cities and towns unto the land of Job. And there endeth the land of the Emperor of Persia. And if ye will know the letters of Persians and what names they have, they be such as I last devised you, but not in sounding of their words.

CHAPTER XVII

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Of the land of Job; *and of his age*. *Of the array of men of Chaldea*. *Of the land where women dwell without company of men*. *Of the knowledge and virtues of the very diamond*

After the departing from Cornaa, men enter into the land of Job that is a full fair country and a plenteous of all goods. And men clepe that land the Land of Susiana. In that land is the city of Theman.

Job was a paynim, and he was Aram of Gosre, his son, and held that land as prince of that country. And he was so rich that he knew not the hundred part of his goods. And although he were a paynim, nevertheless he served well God after his law. And our Lord took his service to his pleasane. And when he fell in poverty he was seventy-eight year of age. And after, when God had proved his patience and that it was so great, he brought him again to riches and to higher estate than he was before. And after that he was King of Idumea after King Esau, and when he was king he was clept Jobab. And in that kingdom he lived after 170 year. And so he was of age, when he died, 248 year.

In that land of Job there ne is no default of no thing that is needful to man's body. There be hills, where men get great plenty of manna in greater abundance than in any other country. This manna is clept bread of angels. And it is a white thing that is full sweet and right delicious, and more sweet than honey or sugar. And it cometh of the dew of heaven that falleth upon the herbs in that country. And it congealeth and becometh all white and sweet. And men put it in medicines for rich men to make the womb lax, and to purge evil blood. For it cleanseth the blood and putteth out melancholy. This land of Job marcheth to the kingdom of Chaldea.

This land of Chaldea is full great. And the language of that country is more great in sounding than it is in other parts of the sea. Men pass to go beyond by the Tower of Babylon the Great, of the which I have told you before, where that all the languages were first changed. And that is a four journeys from Chaldea. In that realm be fair men, and they go full nobly arrayed in clothes of gold, orfrayed and apparelled with great pearls and precious stone's full nobly. And the women be right foul and evil arrayed. And they go all bare-foot and clothed in evil garments large and wide, but they be short

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to the knees, and long sleeves down to the feet like a monk's frock, and their sleeves be hanging about their shoulders. And they be black women foul and hideous, and truly as foul as they be, as evil they be.

In that kingdom of Chaldea, in a city that is clept Ur, dwelled Terah, Abraham's father. And there was Abraham born. And that was in that time that Ninus was king of Babylon, of Arabia and of Egypt. This Ninus made the city of Nineveh, the which that Noah had begun before. And because that Ninus performed it, he cleped it Nineveh after his own name. There lieth Tobit the prophet, of whom Holy Writ speaketh of. And from that city of Ur Abraham departed, by the commandment of God, from thence, after the death of his father, and led with him Sarah his wife and Lot his brother's son, because that he had no child. And they went to dwell in the land of Canaan in a place that is clept Shechem. And this Lot was he that was saved, when Sodom and Gomorrah and the other cities were burnt and sunken down to hell, where that the Dead Sea is now, as I have told you before. In that land of Chaldea they have their proper languages and their proper letters, such as ye may see hereafter.

Beside the land of Chaldea is the land of Amazonia, that is the land of Feminye. And in that realm is all women and no man; not, as some men say, that men may not live there, but for because that the women will not suffer no men amongst them to be their sovereigns.

For sometime there was a king in that country. And men married, as in other countries. And so befell that the king had war with them of Scythia, the which king hight Colopeus, that was slain in battle, p. 104
and all the good blood of his realm. And when the queen and all the other noble ladies saw that they were all widows, and that all the royal blood was lost, they armed them and, as creatures out of wit, they slew all the men of the country that were left; for they would that all the women were widows as the queen and they were. And from that time hitherwards they never would suffer man to dwell amongst them longer than seven days and seven nights; ne that no child that were male should dwell amongst them longer than he were nourished; and then sent to his father. And when they will have any company of man then they draw them towards the lands marching next to them. And then they have loves that use them; and they dwell with them an eight days or ten, and then go home again. And if they have any knave child they keep it a certain time, and then send it to the father when he can go alone and eat by himself; or else they slay it. And if it be a female they do away that one pap with an hot iron. And if it be a woman of great lineage they do away the left pap that they may the better bear a shield. And if it be a woman on foot they do away the right pap, for to shoot with bow turkeys: for they shoot well with bows.

In that land they have a queen that governeth all that land, and all they be obeissant to her. And always they make her queen by election that is most worthy in arms; for they be right good warriors and orped, and wise, noble and worthy. And they go oftentime in solde to help of other kings in their wars, for gold and silver as other soldiers do; and they maintain themselves right vigourously. This land of Amazonia is an isle, all environed with the sea save in two places, where be two entries. And beyond that water dwell the men that be their paramours and their loves, where they go to solace them when they will.

Beside Amazonia is the land of Tarmegyte that is a great country and a full delectable. And for the goodness of the country King Alexander let first make there the city of Alexandria, and yet he made p. 105
twelve cities of the same name; but that city is now clept Celsite.

And from that other coast of Chaldea, toward the south, is Ethiopia, a great country that stretcheth to the end of Egypt. Ethiopia is departed in two parts principal, and that is in the east part and in the meridional part; the which part meridional is clept Mauritania; and the folk of that country be black enough and more black than in the tother part, and they be clept Moors. In that part is a well, that in the day it is so cold, that no man may drink thereof; and in the night it is so hot, that no man may suffer his hand therein. And beyond that part, toward the south, to pass by the sea Ocean, is a great land and a great country; but men may not dwell there for the fervent burning of the sun, so is it passing hot in that country.

In Ethiopia all the rivers and all the waters be trouble, and they be somedeal salt for the great heat that is there. And the folk of that country be lightly drunken and have but little appetite to meat. And they have commonly the flux of the womb. And they live not long. In Ethiopia be many diverse folk; and Ethiope is clept Cusis. In that country be folk that have but one foot, and they go so blyve

that it is marvel. And the foot is so large, that it shadoweth all the body against the sun, when they will lie and rest them. In Ethiopia, when the children be young and little, they be all yellow; and, when that they wax of age, that yellowness turneth to be all black. In Ethiopia is the city of Saba, and the land of the which one of the three kings that presented our Lord in Bethlehem, was king of.

From Ethiopia men go into Ind by many diverse countries. And men clepe the high Ind, Emlak. And Ind is divided in three principal parts; that is, the more that is a full hot country; and Ind the less, that is a full attempre country, that stretcheth to the land of Media; and the three part toward the septentrion is full cold, so that, for pure cold and continual frost, the water becometh crystal. And upon those rocks of crystal grow the good diamonds that be of trouble colour. Yellow crystal draweth p. 106
colour like oil. And they be so hard, that no man may polish them. And men clepe them diamonds in that country, and *Hamese* in another country. Other diamonds men find in Arabia that be not so good, and they be more brown and more tender. And other diamonds also men find in the isle of Cyprus, that be yet more tender, and them men may well polish. And in the land of Macedonia men find diamonds also. But the best and the most precious be in Ind.

And men find many times hard diamonds in a mass that cometh out of gold, when men pure it and refine it out of the mine; when men break that mass in small pieces, and sometime it happens that men find some as great as a peas and some less, and they be as hard as those of Ind.

And albeit that men find good diamonds in Ind, yet nevertheless men find them more commonly upon the rocks in the sea and upon hills where the mine of gold is. And they grow many together, one little, another great. And there be some of the greatness of a bean and some as great as an hazel nut. And they be square and pointed of their own kind, both above and beneath, without working of man's hand. And they grow together, male and female. And they be nourished with the dew of heaven. And they engender commonly and bring forth small children, that multiply and grow all the year. I have often-times assayed, that if a man keep them with a little of the rock and wet them with May-dew oft-sithes, they shall grow every year, and the small will wax great. For right as the fine pearl congealeth and waxeth great of the dew of heaven, right so doth the very diamond; and right as the pearl of his own kind taketh roundness, right so the diamond, by virtue of God, taketh squareness. And men shall bear the diamond on his left side, for it is of greater virtue then, than on the right side; for the strength of their growing is toward the north, that is the left side of the world, and the left part of man is when he turneth his face toward the east.

And if you like to know the virtues of the diamond, (as men may find in *The Lapidary* that many men know not), I shall tell you, as they beyond the sea say and affirm, of whom all science and all p. 107
philosophy cometh from. He that beareth the diamond upon him, it giveth him hardiness and manhood, and it keepeth the limbs of his body whole. It giveth him victory of his enemies in plea and in war, if his cause be rightful. And it keepeth him that beareth it in good wit. And it keepeth him from strife and riot, from evil swevens from sorrows and from enchantments, and from fantasies and illusions of wicked spirits. And if any cursed witch or enchanter would bewitch him that beareth the diamond, all that sorrow and mischance shall turn to himself through virtue of that stone. And also no wild beast dare assail the man that beareth it on him. Also the diamond should be given freely, without coveting and without buying, and then it is of greater virtue. And it maketh a man more strong and more sad against his enemies. And it healeth him that is lunatic, and them that the fiend pursueth or travaileth. And if venom or poison be brought in presence of the diamond, anon it beginneth to wax moist and for to sweat.

There be also diamonds in Ind that be clept violastres, (for their colour is like violet, or more brown than the violets), that be full hard and full precious. But yet some men love not them so well as the other; but, in sooth, to me, I would love them as much as the other, for I have seen them assayed.

Also there is another manner of diamonds that be as white as crystal, but they be a little more trouble. And they be good and of great virtue, and all they be square and pointed of their own kind. And some be six squared, some four squared, and some three as nature shapeth them. And therefore when great lords and knights go to seek worship in arms, they bear gladly the diamond upon them.

I shall speak a little more of the diamonds, although I tarry my matter for a time, to the end, that they that know them not, be not deceived by gabbers that go by the country, that sell them. For whoso will buy the diamond it is needful to him that he know them. Because that men counterfeit them often of crystal that is yellow and of sapphires of citron colour that is yellow also, and of the sapphire loupe p. 108

and of many other stones. But I tell you these counterfeits be not so hard; and also the points will break lightly, and men may easily polish them. But some workmen, for malice, will not polish them; to that intent, to make men believe that they may not be polished. But men may assay them in this manner. First shear with them or write with them in sapphires, in crystal or in other precious stones. After that, men take the adamant, that is the shipman's stone, that draweth the needle to him, and men lay the diamond upon the adamant, and lay the needle before the adamant; and, if the diamond be good and virtuous, the adamant draweth not the needle to him whiles the diamond is there present. And this is the proof that they beyond the sea make.

Natheles it befalleth often-time, that the good diamond loseth his virtue by sin, and for incontinence of him that beareth it. And then it is needful to make it to recover his virtue again, or else it is of little value.

CHAPTER XVIII

Of the customs of Isles about Ind. Of the difference betwixt Idols and Simulacres. Of three manner growing of Pepper upon one tree. Of the Well that changeth his odour every hour of the day; and that is marvel

In Ind be full many diverse countries. And it is clept Ind, for a flom that runneth throughout the country that is clept Ind. In that flom men find eels of thirty foot long and more. And the folk that dwell nigh that water be of evil colour, green and yellow.

In Ind and about Ind be more than 5000 isles good and great that men dwell in, without those that he inhabitable, and without other small isles. In every isle is great plenty of cities, and of towns, and of folk without number. For men of Ind have this condition of kind, that they never go out of their own country, and therefore is there great multitude of people. But they be not stirring ne movable, because that they be in the first climate, that is of Saturn; and Saturn is slow and little moving, for he tarryeth to make his turn by the twelve signs thirty year. And the moon passeth through the twelve signs in one month. And for because that Saturn is of so late stirring, therefore the folk of that country that be under his climate have of kind no will for to move ne stir to seek strange places. And in our country is all the contrary; for we be in the seventh climate, that is of the moon. And the moon is of lightly moving, and the moon is planet of way; and for that skill it giveth us will of kind for to move lightly and for to go divers ways, and to seek strange things and other diversities of the world; for the moon environeth the earth more hastily than any other planet. p. 109

Also men go through Ind by many diverse countries to the great sea Ocean. And after, men find there an isle that is clept Crues. And thither come merchants of Venice and Genoa, and of other marches, for to buy merchandises. But there is so great heat in those marches, and namely in that isle, that, for the great distress of the heat, men's ballocks hang down to their knees for the great dissolution of the body. And men of that country, that know the manner, let bind them up, or else might they not live, and anoint them with ointments made therefore, to hold them up.

In that country and in Ethiopia, and in many other countries, the folk lie all naked in rivers and waters, men and women together, from undern of the day till it be past the noon. And they lie all in the water, save the visage, for the great heat that there is. And the women have no shame of the men, but lie all together, side to side, till the heat be past. There may men see many foul figure assembled, and namely nigh the good towns.

In that isle be ships without nails of iron or bonds, for the rocks of the adamants, for they be all full thereabout in that sea, that it is marvel to speak of. And if a ship passed by those marches that had either iron bonds or iron nails, anon he should be perished; for the adamant of his kind draweth the iron to him. And so would it draw to him the ship because of the iron, that he should never depart from it, ne never go thence. p. 110

From that isle men go by sea to another isle that is clept Chana, where is great plenty of corn and wine. And it was wont to be a great isle, and a great haven and a good; but the sea hath greatly

wasted it and overcome it. The king of that country was wont to be so strong and so mighty that he held war against King Alexander.

The folk of that country have a diverse law. For some of them worship the sun, some the moon, some the fire, some trees, some serpents, or the first thing that they meet at morrow. And some worship simulacres and some idols. But between simulacres and idols is a great difference. For simulacres be images made after likeness of men or of women, or of the sun, or of the moon, or of any beast, or of any kindly thing. And idols is an image made of lewd will of man, that man may not find among kindly things, as an image that hath four heads, one of a man, another of an horse or of an ox, or of some other beast, that no man hath seen after kindly disposition.

And they that worship simulacres, they worship them for some worthy man that was sometime, as Hercules, and many other that did many marvels in their time. For they say well that they be not gods; for they know well that there is a God of kind that made all things, the which is in heaven. But they know well that this may not do the marvels that he made, but if it had been by the special gift of God; and therefore they say that he was well with God, and for because that he was so well with God, therefore they worship him. And so say they of the sun, because that he changeth the time, and giveth heat, and nourisheth all things upon earth; and for it is of so great profit, they know well that that might not be, but that God loveth it more than any other thing, and, for that skill, God hath given it more great virtue in the world. Therefore, it is good reason, as they say, to do it worship and reverence. And so say they, and make their reasons, of other planets, and of the fire also, because it is so profitable. p. 111

And of idols they say also that the ox is the most holy beast that is in earth and most patient, and more profitable than any other. For he doth good enough and he doth no evil; and they know well that it may not be without special grace of God. And therefore make they their god of an ox the one part, and the other half of a man. Because that man is the most noble creature in earth, and also for he hath lordship above all beasts, therefore make they the halvendel of idol of a man upwards; and the tother half of an ox downwards, and of serpents, and of other beasts and diverse things, that they worship, that they meet first at morrow.

And they worship also specially all those that they have good meeting of; and when they speed well in their journey, after their meeting, and namely such as they have proved and assayed by experience of long time; for they say that thilk good meeting ne may not come but of the grace of God. And therefore they make images like to those things that they have belief in, for to behold them and worship them first at morning, or they meet any contrarious things. And there be also some Christian men that say, that some beasts have good meeting, that is to say for to meet with them first at morrow, and some beasts wicked meeting; and that they have proved oft-time that the hare hath full evil meeting, and swine and many other beasts. And the sparrow-hawk or other fowls of ravine, when they fly after their prey and take it before men of arms, it is a good sign; and if he fail of taking his prey, it is an evil sign. And also to such folk, it is an evil meeting of ravens.

In these things and in such other, there be many folk that believe; because it happeneth so often-time to fall after their fantasies. And also there be men enough that have no belief in them. And, sith that Christian men have such belief, that be informed and taught all day by holy doctrine, wherein they should believe, it is no marvel then, that the paynims, that have no good doctrine but only of their nature, believe more largely for their simplesse. And truly I have seen of paynims and Saracens that men clepe Augurs, that, when we ride in arms in divers countries upon our enemies, by the flying of fowls they would tell us the prognostications of things that fell after; and so they did full oftentimes, and proffered their heads to-wedde, but if it would fall as they said. But natheles, therefore should not a man put his belief in such things, but always have full trust and belief in God our sovereign Lord. p. 112

This isle of Chana the Saracens have won and hold. In that isle be many lions and many other wild beasts. And there be rats in that isle as great as hounds here; and men take them with great mastiffs, for cats may not take them. In this isle and many other men bury not no dead men, for the heat is there so great, that in a little time the flesh will consume from the bones.

From thence men go by sea toward Ind the more to a city, that men clepe Sarche, that is a fair city and a good. And there dwell many Christian men of good faith. And there be many religious men, and namely of mendicants.

After go men by sea to the land of Lomb. In that land groweth the pepper in the forest that men clepe Combar. And it groweth nowhere else in all the world, but in that forest, and that endureth well an eighteen journeys in length. In the forest be two good cities; that one hight Fladrine and that other Zinglantz, and in every of them dwell Christian men and Jews, great plenty. For it is a good country and a plentiful, but there is overmuch passing heat.

And ye shall understand, that the pepper groweth in manner as doth a wild vine that is planted fast by the trees of that wood for to sustain it by, as doth the vine. And the fruit thereof hangeth in manner as raisins. And the tree is so thick charged, that it seemeth that it would break. And when it is ripe it is all green, as it were ivy berries. And then men cut them, as men do the vines, and then they put it upon an oven, and there it waxeth black and crisp. And there is three manner of pepper all upon one tree; long pepper, black pepper and white pepper. The long pepper men clepe *Sorbotin*, and the black p. 113
pepper is clept *Fulfulle*, and the white pepper is clept *Bano*. The long pepper cometh first when the leaf beginneth to come, and it is like the cats of hazel that cometh before the leaf, and it hangeth low. And after cometh the black with the leaf, in manner of clusters of raisins, all green. And when men have gathered it, then cometh the white that is somedeal less than the black. And of that men bring but little into this country; for they beyond withhold it for themselves, because it is better and more attempre in kind than the black. And therefore is there not so great plenty as of the black.

In that country be many manner of serpents and of other vermin for the great heat of the country and of the pepper. And some men say, that when they will gather the pepper, they make fire, and burn about to make the serpents and the cockodrills to flee. But save their grace of all that say so. For if they burnt about the trees that bear, the pepper should be burnt, and it would dry up all the virtue, as of any other thing; and then they did themselves much harm, and they should never quench the fire. But thus they do: they anoint their hands and their feet [with a juice] made of snails and of other things made therefore, of the which the serpents and the venomous beasts hate and dread the savour; and that maketh them flee before them, because of the smell, and then they gather it surely enough.

Also toward the head of that forest is the city of Polombe. And above the city is a great mountain that also is clept Polombe. And of that mount the city hath his name.

And at the foot of that mount is a fair well and a great, that hath odour and savour of all spices. And at every hour of the day he changeth his odour and his savour diversely. And whoso drinketh three times fasting of that water of that well he is whole of all manner sickness that he hath. And they that dwell there and drink often of that well they never have sickness; and they seem always young. I have drunken thereof three or four sithes, and yet, methinketh, I fare the better. Some men clepe it p. 114
the well of youth. For they that often drink thereof seem always young-like, and live without sickness. And men say, that that well cometh out of Paradise, and therefore it is so virtuous.

By all that country groweth good ginger, and therefore thither go the merchants for spicery.

In that land men worship the ox for his simpleness and for his meekness, and for the profit that cometh of him. And they say, that he is the holiest beast in earth. For them seemeth, that whosoever be meek and patient, he is holy and profitable; for then, they say, he hath all virtues in him. They make the ox to labour six year or seven, and then they eat him. And the king of the country hath alway an ox with him. And he that keepeth him hath every day great fees, and keepeth every day his dung and his urine in two vessels of gold, and bring it before their prelate that they clepe Archi-protopapaton. And he beareth it before the king and maketh there over a great blessing. And then the king wetteth his hands there, in that they clepe gall, and anointeth his front and his breast. And after, he froteth him with the dung and with the urine with great reverence, for to be fullfilled of virtues of the ox and made holy by the virtue of that holy thing that nought is worth. And when the king hath done, then do the lords; and after them their ministers and other men, if they may have any remenant.

In that country they make idols, half man half ox. And in those idols evil spirits speak and give answer to men of what is asked them. Before these idols men slay their children many times, and spring the blood upon the idols; and so they make their sacrifice.

And when any man dieth in the country they burn his body in name of penance; to that intent, that he suffer no pain in earth to be eaten of worms. And if his wife have no child they burn her with him, and say, that it is reason, that she make him company in that other world as she did in this. But and she have children with him, they let her live with them, to bring them up if she will. And if that she

love more to live with her children than for to die with her husband, men hold her for false and cursed; ne she shall never be loved ne trusted of the people. And if the woman die, before the husband, men burn him with her, if that he will; and if he will not, no man constraineth him thereto, but he may wed another time without blame or reproof. p. 115

In that country grow many strong vines. And the women drink wine, and men not. And the women shave their beards, and the men not.

CHAPTER XIX

Of the Dooms made by St. Thomas's hand. Of devotion and sacrifice made to Idols there, in the city of Calamye; and of the Procession in going about the city

From that country men pass by many marches toward a country, a ten journeys thence, that is clept Mabaron; and it is a great kingdom, and it hath many fair cities and towns.

In that kingdom lieth the body of Saint Thomas the apostle in flesh and bone, in a fair tomb in the city of Calamye; for there he was martyred and buried. And men of Assyria bare his body into Mesopotamia into the city of Edessa, and after, he was brought thither again. And the arm and the hand that he put in our Lord's side, when he appeared to him after his resurrection and said to him, *Noli esse incredulus*, *sed fidelis*, is yet lying in a vessel without the tomb. And by that hand they make all their judgments in the country, whoso hath right or wrong. For when there is any dissension between two parties, and every of them maintaineth his cause, and saith that his cause is rightful, and that other saith the contrary, then both parties write their causes in two bills and put them in the hand of Saint Thomas. And anon he casteth away the bill of the wrong cause and holdeth still the bill with the right cause. And therefore men come from far countries to have judgment of doubtable causes. And other judgment use they none there. p. 116

Also the church, where Saint Thomas' lieth, is both great and fair, and all full of great simulacres, and those be great images that they clepe their gods, of the which the least is as great as two men.

And, amongst these other, there is a great image more than any of the other, that is all covered with fine gold and precious stones and rich pearls; and that idol is the god of false Christians that have reneyed their faith. And it sitteth in a chair of gold, full nobly arrayed, and he hath about his neck large girdles wrought of gold and precious stones and pearls. And this church is full richly wrought and, all overgilt within. And to that idol go men on pilgrimage, as commonly and with as great devotion as Christian men go to Saint James, or other holy pilgrimages. And many folk that come from far lands to seek that idol for the great devotion that they have, they look never upward, but evermore down to the earth, for dread to see anything about them that should let them of their devotion. And some there be that go on pilgrimage to this idol, that bear knives in their hands, that be made full keen and sharp; and always as they go, they smite themselves in their arms and in their legs and in their thighs with many hideous wounds; and so they shed their blood for love of that idol. And they say, that he is blessed and holy, that dieth so for love of his god. And other there be that lead their children for to slay, to make sacrifice to that idol; and after they have slain them they spring the blood upon the idol. And some there be that come from far; and in going toward this idol, at every third pace that they go from their house, they kneel; and so continue till they come thither: and when they come there, they take incense and other aromatic things of noble smell, and cense the idol, as we would do here God's precious body. And so come folk to worship this idol, some from an hundred mile, and some from many more.

And before the minster of this idol, is a vivary, in manner of a great lake, full of water. And therein pilgrims cast gold and silver, pearls and precious stones without number, instead of offerings. And when the minister of that church need to make any reparation of the church or of any of the idols, they take gold and silver, pearls and precious stones out of the vivary, to quit the costage of such thing as they make or repair; so that that nothing is faulty, but anon it shall be amended. And ye shall understand, that when [there be] great feasts and solemnities of that idol, as the dedication of the p. 117

church and the throning of the idol, all the country about meet there together. And they set this idol upon a car with great reverence, well arrayed with cloths of gold, of rich cloths of Tartary, of Camaka, and other precious cloths. And they lead him about the city with great solemnity. And before the car go first in procession all the maidens of the country, two and two together full ordinatly. And after those maidens go the pilgrims. And some of them fall down under the wheels of the car, and let the car go over them, so that they be dead anon. And some have their arms or their limbs all to-broken, and some the sides. And all this do they for love of their god, in great devotion. And them thinketh that the more pain, and the more tribulation that they suffer for love of their god, the more joy they shall have in another world. And, shortly to say you, they suffer so great pains, and so hard martyrdoms for love of their idol, that a Christian man, I trow, durst not take upon him the tenth part the pain for love of our Lord Jesu Christ. And after, I say you, before the car, go all the minstrels of the country without number, with diverse instruments, and they make all the melody that they can.

And when they have gone all about the city, then they return again to the minster, and put the idol again into his place. And then for the love and in worship of that idol, and for the reverence of the feast, they slay themselves, a two hundred or three hundred persons, with sharp knives, of the which they bring the bodies before the idol. And then they say that those be saints, because that they slew p. 118 themselves of their own good will for love of their idol. And as men here that had an holy saint of his kin would think that it were to them an high worship, right so then, thinketh there. And as men here devoutly would write holy saints' lives and their miracles, and sue for their canonizations, right so do they there for them that slay themselves wilfully for love of their idol, and say, that they be glorious martyrs and saints, and put them in their writings and in their litanies, and avaunt them greatly, one to another, of their holy kinsmen that so become saints, and say, I have more holy saints in my kindred, than thou in thine!

And the custom also there is this, that when they that have such devotion and intent for to slay himself for love of his god, they send for all their friends, and have great plenty of minstrels; and they go before the idol leading him that will slay himself for such devotion between them, with great reverence. And he, all naked, hath a full sharp knife in his hand, and he cutteth a great piece of his flesh, and casteth it in the face of his idol, saying his orisons, recommending him to his god. And then he smiteth himself and maketh great wounds and deep, here and there, till he fall down dead. And then his friends present his body to the idol. And then they say, singing, Holy god! behold what thy true servant hath done for thee. He hath forsaken his wife and his children and his riches, and all the goods of the world and his own life for the love of thee, and to make thee sacrifice of his flesh and of his blood. Wherefore, holy god, put him among thy best beloved saints in thy bliss of paradise, for he hath well deserved it. And then they make a great fire, and burn the body. And then everych of his friends take a quantity of the ashes, and keep them instead of relics, and say that it is holy thing. And they have no dread of no peril whiles they have those holy ashes upon them. And [they] put his name in their litanies as a saint.

CHAPTER XX

p. 119

Of the evil customs used in the Isle of Lamary. And how the earth and the sea be of round form and shape, by proof of the star that is clept Antarctic, that is fixed in the south

From that country go men by the sea ocean, and by many divers isles and by many countries that were too long for to tell of. And a fifty-two journeys from this land that I have spoken of, there is another land, that is full great, that men clepe Lamary. In that land is full great heat. And the custom there is such, that men and women go all naked. And they scorn when they see any strange folk going clothed. And they say, that God made Adam and Eve all naked, and that no man should shame him to shew him such as God made him, for nothing is foul that is of kindly nature. And they say, that they that be clothed be folk of another world, or they be folk that trow not in God. And they say, that they believe in God that formed the world, and that made Adam and Eve and all other things. And they wed there no wives, for all the women there be common and they forsake no man. And

they say they sin if they refuse any man; and so God commanded to Adam and Eve and to all that come of him, when he said, *Crescite et multiplicamini et replete terram*. And therefore may no man in that country say, This is my wife; ne no woman may say, This my husband. And when they have children, they may give them to what man they will that hath companied with them. And also all the land is common; for all that a man holdeth one year, another man hath it another year; and every man taketh what part that him liketh. And also all the goods of the land be common, corns and all other things: for nothing there is kept in close, ne nothing there is under lock, and every man there taketh what he will without any contradiction, and as rich is one man there as is another.

But in that country there is a cursed custom, for they eat more gladly man's flesh than any other flesh; p. 120
and yet is that country abundant of flesh, of fish, of corns, of gold and silver, and of all other goods. Thither go merchants and bring with them children to sell to them of the country, and they buy them. And if they be fat they eat them anon. And if they be lean they feed them till they be fat, and then they eat them. And they say, that it is the best flesh and the sweetest of all the world.

In that land, ne in many other beyond that, no man may see the Star Transmontane, that is clept the Star of the Sea, that is unmovable and that is toward the north, that we clepe the Lode-star. But men see another star, the contrary to him, that is toward the south, that is clept Antartic. And right as the ship-men take their advice here and govern them by the Lode-star, right so do ship-men beyond those parts by the star of the south, the which star appeareth not to us. And this star that is toward the north, that we clepe the Lode-star, ne appeareth not to them. For which cause men may well perceive, that the land and the sea be of round shape and form; for the part of the firmament sheweth in one country that sheweth not in another country. And men may well prove by experience and subtle compassment of wit, that if a man found passages by ships that would go to search the world, men might go by ship all about the world and above and beneath.

The which thing I prove thus after that I have seen. For I have been toward the parts of Brabant, and beholden the Astrolabe that the star that is clept the Transmontane is fifty-three degrees high; and more further in Almayne and Bohemia it hath fifty-eight degrees; and more further toward the parts septentrional it is sixty-two degrees of height and certain minutes; for I myself have measured it by the Astrolabe. Now shall ye know, that against the Transmontane is the tother star that is clept Antarctic, as I have said before. And those two stars ne move never, and by them turneth all the firmament right as doth a wheel that turneth by his axle-tree. So that those stars bear the firmament in two equal parts, so that it hath as much above as it hath beneath. After this, I have gone toward the p. 121
parts meridional, that is, toward the south, and I have found that in Lybia men see first the star Antarctic. And so far I have gone more further in those countries, that I have found that star more high; so that toward the High Lybia it is eighteen degrees of height and certain minutes (of the which sixty minutes make a degree). After going by sea and by land toward this country of that I have spoken, and to other isles and lands beyond that country, I have found the Star Antarctic of thirty-three degrees of height and more minutes. And if I had had company and shipping for to go more beyond, I trow well, in certain, that we should have seen all the roundness of the firmament all about. For, as I have said to you before, the half of the firmament is between those two stars, the which halvendel I have seen. And of the tother halvendel I have seen, toward the north under the Transmontane, sixty-two degrees and ten minutes, and toward the part meridional I have seen under the Antarctic, thirty-three degrees and sixteen minutes. And then, the halvendel of the firmament in all holdeth not but nine score degrees. And of those nine score, I have seen sixty-two on that one part and thirty-three on that other part; that be, ninety-five degrees and nigh the halvendel of a degree. And so, there ne faileth but that I have seen all the firmament, save four score and four degrees and the halvendel of a degree, and that is not the fourth part of the firmament; for the fourth part of the roundness of the firmament holds four score and ten degrees, so there faileth but five degrees and an half of the fourth part. And also I have seen the three parts of all the roundness of the firmament and more yet five degrees and a half. By the which I say you certainly that men may environ all the earth of all the world, as well under as above, and turn again to his country, that had company and shipping and conduct. And always he should find men, lands and isles, as well as in this country. For ye wit well, that they that be toward the Antarctic, they be straight, feet against feet, of them that dwell under the Transmontane; also well as we and they that dwell under us be feet against feet. For all the p. 122
parts of sea and of land have their opposites, habitable trepassable, and they of this half and beyond half.

And wit well, that, after that that I may perceive and comprehend, the lands of Prester John, Emperor of Ind, be under us. For in going from Scotland or from England toward Jerusalem men go upward always. For our land is in the low part of the earth toward the west, and the land of Prester John is in the low part of the earth toward the east. And [they] have there the day when we have the night; and also, high to the contrary, they have the night when we have the day. For the earth and the sea be of round form and shape, as I have said before; and that that men go upward to one coast, men go downward to another coast.

Also ye have heard me say that Jerusalem is in the midst of the world. And that may men prove, and shew there by a spear, that is pight into the earth, upon the hour of midday, when it is equinox, that sheweth no shadow on no side. And that it should be in the midst of the world, David witnesseth it in the Psalter, where he saith, *Deus operatus est salutem in media terrae*. Then, they, that part from those parts of the west for to go toward Jerusalem, as many journeys as they go upward for to go thither, in as many journeys may they go from Jerusalem unto other confines of the superficiality of the earth beyond. And when men go beyond those journeys toward Ind and to the foreign isles, all is environing the roundness of the earth and of the sea under our countries on this half.

And therefore hath it befallen many times of one thing that I have heard counted when I was young, how a worthy man departed some-time from our countries for to go search the world. And so he passed Ind and the isles beyond Ind, where be more than 5000 isles. And so long he went by sea and land, and so environed the world by many seasons, that he found an isle where he heard speak his own language, calling on oxen in the plough, such words as men speak to beasts in his own country whereof he had great marvel, for he knew not how it might be. But I say, that he had gone so long by p. 123
land and by sea, that he had environed all the earth; that he was come again environing, that is to say, going about, unto his own marches, and if he would have passed further, till he had found his country and his own knowledge. But he turned again from thence, from whence he was come from. And so he lost much painful labour, as himself said a great while after that he was come home. For it befell after, that he went into Norway. And there tempest of the sea took him, and he arrived in an isle. And, when he was in that isle, he knew well that it was the isle, where he had heard speak his own language before and the calling of oxen at the plough; and that was possible thing.

But how it seemeth to simple men unlearned, that men ne may not go under the earth, and also that men should fall toward the heaven from under. But that may not be, upon less than we may fall toward heaven from the earth where we be. For from what part of the earth that men dwell, either above or beneath, it seemeth always to them that dwell that they go more right than any other folk. And right as it seemeth to us that they be under us, right so it seemeth to them that we be under them. For if a man might fall from the earth unto the firmament, by greater, reason the earth and the sea that be so great and so heavy should fall to the firmament: but that may not be, and therefore saith our Lord God, *Non timeas me*, *qui suspendi terram ex nihilo*?

And albeit that it be possible thing that men may so environ all the world, natheles, of a thousand persons, one ne might not happen to return into his country. For, for the greatness of the earth and of the sea, men may go by a thousand and a thousand other ways, that no man could ready him perfectly toward the parts that he came from, but if it were by adventure and hap, or by the grace of God. For the earth is full large and full great, and holds in roundness and about environ, by above and by beneath, 20425 miles, after the opinion of old wise astronomers; and their sayings I reprove nought. p. 124
But, after my little wit, it seemeth me, saving their reverence, that it is more.

And for to have better understanding I say thus. Be there imagined a figure that hath a great compass. And, about the point of the great compass that is clept the centre, be made another little compass. Then after, be the great compass devised by lines in many parts, and that all the lines meet at the centre. So, that in as many parts as the great compass shall be departed, in as many shall be departed the little, that is about the centre, albeit that the spaces be less. Now then, be the great compass represented for the firmament, and the little compass represented for the earth. Now then, the firmament is devised by astronomers in twelve signs, and every sign is devised in thirty degrees; that is, 360 degrees that the firmament hath above. Also, be the earth devised in as many parts as the firmament, and let every part answer to a degree of the firmament. And wit it well, that, after the authors of astronomy, 700 furlongs of earth answer to a degree of the firmament, and those be eighty-seven miles and four furlongs. Now be that here multiplied by 360 sithes, and then they be 31,500

miles every of eight furlongs, after miles of our country. So much hath the earth in roundness and of height environ, after mine opinion and mine understanding.

And ye shall understand, that after the opinion of old wise philosophers and astronomers, our country ne Ireland ne Wales ne Scotland ne Norway ne the other isles coasting to them ne be not in the superficiality counted above the earth, as it sheweth by all the books of astronomy. For the superficiality of the earth is parted in seven parts for the seven planets, and those parts be clept climates. And our parts be not of the seven climates, for they be descending toward the west †[drawing] towards the roundness of the world. †And also these isles of Ind which be even against us be not reckoned in the climates. For they be against us that be in the low country. And the seven climates stretch them environing the world.

CHAPTER XXI

p. 125

Of the Palace of the King of the Isle of Java. Of the Trees that bear meal, honey, wine, and venom; and of other marvels and customs used in the Isles marching thereabout

Beside that isle that I have spoken of, there is another isle that is clept Sumobor. That is a great isle, and the king thereof is right mighty. The folk of that isle make them always to be marked in the visage with an hot iron, both men and women, for great noblesse, for to be known from other folk; for they hold themselves most noble and most worthy of all the world. And they have war always with the folk that go all naked.

And fast beside is another isle, that is clept Betemga, that is a good isle and a plenteous. And many other isles be thereabout, where there be many of diverse folk, of the which it were too long to speak of all.

But fast beside that isle, for to pass by sea, is a great isle and a great country that men clepe Java. And it is nigh two thousand mile in circuit. And the king of that country is a full great lord and a rich and a mighty, and hath under him seven other kings of seven other isles about him. This isle is full well inhabited, and full well manned. There grow all manner of spicery, more plenteously than in any other country, as of ginger, cloves-gilofre, canell, seedwall, nutmegs and maces. And wit well, that the nutmeg beareth the maces; for right as the nut of the hazel hath an husk without, that the nut is closed in till it be ripe and that after falleth out, right so it is of the nutmeg and of the maces. Many other spices and many other goods grow in that isle. For of all things is there plenty, save only of wine. But there is gold and silver, great plenty.

And the king of that country hath a palace full noble and full marvellous, and more rich than any in the world. For all the degrees to go up into halls and chambers be, one of gold, another of silver. p. 126 And also, the pavements of halls and chambers be all square, of gold one, and another of silver. And all the walls within be covered with gold and silver in fine plates, and in those plates be stories and battles of knights enleved, and the crowns and the circles about their heads be made of precious stones and rich pearls and great. And the halls and the chambers of the palace be all covered within with gold and silver, so that no man would trow the riches of that palace but he had seen it. And wit well, that the king of that isle is so mighty, that he hath many times overcome the great Chan of Cathay in battle, that is the most great emperor that is under the firmament either beyond the sea or on this half. For they have had often-time war between them, because that the great Chan would constrain him to hold his land of him; but that other at all times defendeth him well against him.

After that isle, in going by sea, men find another isle, good and great, that men clepe Pathen, that is a great kingdom full of fair cities and full of towns. In that land grow trees that bear meal, whereof men make good bread and white and of good savour; and it seemeth as it were of wheat, but it is not allinges of such savour. And there be other trees that bear honey good and sweet, and other trees that bear venom, against the which there is no medicine but [one]; and that is to take their proper leaves and stamp them and temper them with water and then drink it, and else he shall die; for triacle will not avail, ne none other medicine. Of this venom the Jews had let seek of one of their friends for to

empoison all Christianity, as I have heard them say in their confession before their dying: but thanked be Almighty God! they failed of their purpose; but always they make great mortality of people. And other trees there be also that bear wine of noble sentiment. And if you like to hear how the meal cometh out of the trees I shall say you. Men hew the trees with an hatchet, all about the foot of the tree, till that the bark be parted in many parts, and then cometh out thereof a thick liquor, the which they receive in vessels, and dry it at the heat of the sun; and then they have it to a mill to grind and it p. 127
becometh fair meal and white. And the honey and the wine and the venom be drawn out of other trees in the same manner, and put in vessels for to keep.

In that isle is a dead sea, that is a lake that hath no ground; and if anything fall into that lake it shall never come up again. In that lake grow reeds, that be canes, that they clepe Thaby, that be thirty fathoms long; and of these canes men make fair houses. And there be other canes that be not so long, that grow near the land and have so long roots that endure well a four quarters of a furlong or more; and at the knots of those roots men find precious stones that have great virtues. And he that beareth any of them upon him, iron ne steel may not hurt him, ne draw no blood upon him; and therefore, they that have those stones upon them fight full hardily both on sea and land, for men may not harm [them] on no part. And therefore, they that know the manner, and shall fight with them, they shoot to them arrows and quarrels without iron or steel, and so they hurt them and slay them. And also of those canes they make houses and ships and other things, as we have here, making houses and ships of oak or of any other trees. And deem no man that I say it but for a trifle, for I have seen of the canes with mine own eyes, full many times, lying upon the river of that lake, of the which twenty of our fellows ne might not lift up ne bear one to the earth.

After this isle men go by sea to another isle that is clept Calonak. And it is a fair land and a plenteous of goods. And the king of that country hath as many wives as he will. For he maketh search all the country to get him the fairest maidens that may be found, and maketh them to be brought before him. And he taketh one one night, and another another night, and so forth continually suing; so that he hath a thousand wives or more. And he lieth never but one night with one of them, and another night with another; but if that one happen to be more lusty to his pleasance than another. And therefore the king getteth full many children, some-time an hundred, some-time a two-hundred, and some-time p. 128
more. And he hath also into a 14,000 elephants or more that he maketh for to be brought up amongst his villains by all his towns. For in case that he had any war against any other king about him, then [he] maketh certain men of arms for to go up into the castles of tree made for the war, that craftily be set upon the elephants' backs, for to fight against their enemies. And so do other kings there-about. For the manner of war is not there as it is here or in other countries, ne the ordinance of war neither. And men clepe the elephants *Warkes*.

And in that isle there is a great marvel, more to speak of than in any other part of the world. For all manner of fishes, that be there in the sea about them, come once in the year—each manner of diverse fishes, one manner of kind after other. And they cast themselves to the sea bank of that isle so great plenty and multitude, that no man may unnethe see but fish. And there they abide three days. And every man of the country taketh of them as many as him liketh. And after, that manner of fish after the third day departeth and goeth into the sea. And after them come another multitude of fish of another kind and do in the same manner as the first did, other three days. And after them another, till all the diverse manner of fishes have been there, and that men have taken of them that them liketh. And no man knoweth the cause wherefore it may be. But they of the country say that it is for to do reverence to their king, that is the most worthy king that is in the world as they say; because that he fulfilleth the commandment that God bade to Adam and Eve, when God said, *Crescite et multiplicamini et replete terram*. And for because that he multiplieth so the world with children, therefore God sendeth him so the fishes of diverse kinds of all that be in the sea, to take at his will for him and all his people. And therefore all the fishes of the sea come to make him homage as the most noble and excellent king of the world, and that is best beloved with God, as they say. I know not the reason, why it is, but God knoweth; but this, me-seemeth, is the most marvel that ever I saw. For this p. 129
marvel is against kind and not with kind, that the fishes that have freedom to environ all the coasts of the sea at their own list, come of their own will to proffer them to the death, without constraining of man. And therefore, I am siker that this may not be, without a great token.

There be also in that country a kind of snails that be so great, that many persons may lodge them in their shells, as men would do in a little house. And other snails there be that be full great but not so huge as the other. And of these snails, and of great white worms that have black heads that be as

great as a man's thigh, and some less as great worms that men find there in woods, men make viand royal for the king and for other great lords. And if a man that is married die in that country, men bury his wife with him all quick; for men say there, that it is reason that she make him company in that other world as she did in this.

From that country men go by the sea ocean by an isle that is clept Caffolos. Men of that country when their friends be sick they hang them upon trees, and say that it is better that birds, that be angels of God, eat them, than the foul worms of the earth.

From that isle men go to another isle, where the folk be of full cursed kind. For they nourish great dogs and teach them to strangle their friends when they be sick. For they will not that they die of kindly death. For they say, that they should suffer too great pain if they abide to die by themselves, as nature would. And, when they be thus enstrangled, they eat their flesh instead of venison.

Afterward men go by many isles by sea unto an isle that men clepe Milke. And there is a full cursed people. For they delight in nothing more than for to fight and to slay men. And they drink gladliest man's blood, the which they clepe Dieu. And the more men that a man may slay, the more worship he hath amongst them. And if two persons be at debate and, peradventure, be accorded by their friends or by some of their alliance, it behoveth that every of them that shall be accorded drink of other's blood: and else the accord ne the alliance is nought worth: ne it shall not be no reproof to him to break the alliance and the accord, but if every of them drink of others' blood. p. 130

And from that isle men go by sea, from isle to isle, unto an isle that is clept Tracoda, where the folk of that country be as beasts, and unreasonable, and dwell in caves that they make in the earth; for they have no wit to make them houses. And when they see any man passing through their countries they hide them in their caves. And they eat flesh of serpents, and they eat but little. And they speak nought, but they hiss as serpents do. And they set no price by no avoir ne riches, but only of a precious stone, that is amongst them, that is of sixty colours. And for the name of the isle, they clepe it Tracodon. And they love more that stone than anything else; and yet they know not the virtue thereof, but they covet it and love it only for the beauty.

After that isle men go by the sea ocean, by many isles, unto an isle that is clept Nacumera, that is a great isle and good and fair. And it is in compass about, more than a thousand mile. And all the men and women of that isle have hounds' heads, and they be clept Cynocephales. And they be full reasonable and of good understanding, save that they worship an ox for their God. And also every one of them beareth an ox of gold or of silver in his forehead, in token that they love well their God. And they go all naked save a little clout, that they cover with their knees and their members. They be great folk and well-fighting. And they have a great targe that covereth all the body, and a spear in their hand to fight with. And if they take any man in battle, anon they eat him.

The king of that isle is full rich and full mighty and right devout after his law. And he hath about his neck 300 pearls orient, good and great and knotted, as paternosters here of amber. And in manner as we say our *Pater Noster* and our *Ave Maria*, counting the *Pater Nosters*, right so this king saith every day devoutly 300 prayers to his God, or that he eat. And he beareth also about his neck a ruby orient, noble and fine, that is a foot of length and five fingers large. And, when they choose their king, they take him that ruby to bear in his hand; and so they lead him, riding all about the city. And from thence-fromward they be all obeissant to him. And that ruby he shall bear always about his neck, for if he had not that ruby upon him men would not hold him for king. The great Chan of Cathay hath greatly coveted that ruby, but he might never have it for war, ne for no manner of goods. This king is so rightful and of equity in his dooms, that men may go sikerly throughout all his country and bear with them what them list; that no man shall be hardy to rob them, and if he were, the king would justified anon. p. 131

From this land men go to another isle that is clept Silha. And it is well a 800 miles about. In that land is full much waste, for it is full of serpents, of dragons and of cockodrills, that no man dare dwell there. These cockodrills be serpents, yellow and rayed above, and have four feet and short thighs, and great nails as claws or talons. And there be some that have five fathoms in length, and some of six and of eight and of ten. And when they go by places that be gravelly, it seemeth as though men had drawn a great tree through the gravelly place. And there be also many wild beasts, and namely of elephants.

In that isle is a great mountain. And in mid place of the mount is a great lake in a full fair plain; and there is great plenty of water. And they of the country say, that Adam and Eve wept upon that mount an hundred year, when they were driven out of Paradise, and that water, they say, is of their tears; for so much water they wept, that made the foresaid lake. And in the bottom of that lake men find many precious stones and great pearls. In that lake grow many reeds and great canes; and there within be many cocodrills and serpents and great water-leeches. And the king of that country, once every year, giveth leave to poor men to go into the lake to gather them precious stones and pearls, by way of alms, for the love of God that made Adam. And all the year men find enough. And for the vermin p. 132
that is within, they anoint their arms and their thighs and legs with an ointment made of a thing that is clept lemons, that is a manner of fruit like small pease; and then have they no dread of no cockodrills, ne of none other venomous vermin. This water runneth, flowing and ebbing, by a side of the mountain, and in that river men find precious stones and pearls, great plenty. And men of that isle say commonly, that the serpents and the wild beasts of that country will not do no harm ne touch with evil no strange man that entereth into that country, but only to men that be born of the same country.

In that country and others thereabout there be wild geese that have two heads. And there be lions, all white and as great as oxen, and many other diverse beasts and fowls also that be not seen amongst us.

And wit well, that in that country and in other isles thereabout, the sea is so high, that it seemeth as though it hung at the clouds, and that it would cover all the world. And that is great marvel that it might be so, save only the will of God, that the air sustaineth it. And therefore saith David in the Psalter, *Mirabiles elationes maris*.

CHAPTER XXII

How men know by the Idol, if the sick shall die or not. Of Folk of diverse shape and marvellously disfigured. And of the Monks that gave their relief to baboons, apes, and marmosets, and to other beasts

From that isle, in going by sea toward the south, is another great isle that is clept Dondun. In that isle be folk of diverse kinds, so that the father eateth the son, the son the father, the husband the wife, and the wife the husband. And if it so befall, that the father or mother or any of their friends be sick, anon p. 133
the son goeth to the priest of their law and prayeth him to ask the idol if his father or mother or friend shall die on that evil or not. And then the priest and the son go together before the idol and kneel full devoutly and ask of the idol their demand. And if the devil that is within answer that he shall live, they keep him well; and if he say that he shall die, then the priest goeth with the son, with the wife of him that is sick, and they put their hands upon his mouth and stop his breath, and so they slay him. And after that, they chop all the body in small pieces, and pray all his friends to come and eat of him that is dead. And they send for all the minstrels of the country and make a solemn feast. And when they have eaten the flesh, they take the bones and bury them, and sing and make great melody. And all those that be of his kin or pretend them to be his friends, an they come not to that feast, they be reproved for evermore and shamed, and make great dole, for never after shall they be holden as friends. And they say also, that men eat their flesh for to deliver them out of pain; for if the worms of the earth eat them the soul should suffer great pain, as they say. And namely when the flesh is tender and meagre, then say their friends, that they do great sin to let them have so long languor to suffer so much pain without reason. And when they find the flesh fat, then they say, that it is well done to send them soon to Paradise, and that they have not suffered him too long to endure in pain.

The king of this isle is a full great lord and a mighty, and hath under him fifty-four great isles that give tribute to him. And in everych of these isles is a king crowned; and all be obeissant to that king. And he hath in those isles many diverse folk.

In one of these isles be folk of great stature, as giants. And they be hideous for to look upon. And they have but one eye, and that is in the middle of the front. And they eat nothing but raw flesh and raw fish.

And in another isle toward the south dwell folk of foul stature and of cursed kind that have no heads. p. 134
And their eyen be in their shoulders.

And in another isle be folk that have the face all flat, all plain, without nose and without mouth. But they have two small holes, all round, instead of their eyes, and their mouth is plat also without lips.

And in another isle be folk of foul fashion and shape that have the lip above the mouth so great, that when they sleep in the sun they cover all the face with that lip.

And in another isle there be little folk, as dwarfs. And they be two so much as the pigmies. And they have no mouth; but instead of their mouth they have a little round hole, and when they shall eat or drink, they take through a pipe or a pen or such a thing, and suck it in, for they have no tongue; and therefore they speak not, but they make a manner of hissing as an adder doth, and they make signs one to another as monks do, by the which every of them understandeth other.

And in another isle be folk that have great ears and long, that hang down to their knees.

And in another isle be folk that have horses' feet. And they be strong and mighty, and swift runners; for they take wild beasts with running, and eat them.

And in another isle be folk that go upon their hands and their feet as beasts. And they be all skinned and feathered, and they will leap as lightly into trees, and from tree to tree, as it were squirrels or apes.

And in another isle be folk that be both man and woman, and they have kind; of that one and of that other. And they have but one pap on the one side, and on that other none. And they have members of generation of man and woman, and they use both when they list, once that one, and another time that other. And they get children, when they use the member of man; and they bear children, when they use the member of woman.

And in another isle be folk that go always upon their knees full marvellously. And at every pace that they go, it seemeth that they would fall. And they have in every foot eight toes.

Many other diverse folk of diverse natures be there in other isles about, of the which it were too long p. 135
to tell, and therefore I pass over shortly.

From these isles, in passing by the sea ocean toward the east by many journeys, men find a great country and a great kingdom that men clepe Mancy. And that is in Ind the more. And it is the best land and one the fairest that may be in all the world, and the most delectable and the most plenteous of all goods that is in power of man. In that land dwell many Christian men and Saracens, for it is a good country and a great. And there be therein more than 2000 great cities and rich, without other great towns. And there is more plenty of people there than in any other part of Ind, for the bounty of the country. In that country is no needy man, ne none that goeth on begging. And they be full fair folk, but they be all pale. And the men have thin beards and few hairs, but they be long; but unnethe hath any man passing fifty hairs in his beard, and one hair sits here, another there, as the beard of a leopard or of a cat. In that land be many fairer women than in any other country beyond the sea, and therefore men clepe that land Albany, because that the folk be white.

And the chief city of that country is clept Latorin, and it is a journey from the sea, and it is much more than Paris. In that city is a great river bearing ships that go to all the coasts in the sea. No city of the world is so well stored of ships as is that. And all those of the city and of the country worship idols. In that country be double sithes more birds than be here. There be white geese, red about the neck, and they have a great crest as a cock's comb upon their heads; and they be much more there than they be here, and men buy them there all quick, right great cheap. And there is great plenty of adders of whom men make great feasts and eat them at great solemnities; and he that maketh there a feast be it never so costly, an he have no adders he hath no thank for his travail.

Many good cities there be in that country and men have great plenty and great cheap of all wines and victuals. In that country be many churches of religious men, and of their law. And in those churches p. 136
be idols as great as giants; and to these idols they give to eat at great festival days in this manner. They bring before them meat all sodden, as hot as they come from the fire, and they let the smoke go

up towards the idols; and then they say that the idols have eaten; and then the religious men eat the meat afterwards.

In that country be white hens without feathers, but they bear white wool as sheep do here. In that country women that be unmarried, they have tokens on their heads like coronals to be known for unmarried. Also in that country there be beasts taught of men to go into waters, into rivers and into deep stanks for to take fish; the which beast is but little, and men clepe them loirs. And when men cast them into the water, anon they bring up great fishes, as many as men will. And if men will have more, they cast them in again, and they bring up as many as men list to have.

And from that city passing many journeys is another city, one the greatest of the world, that men clepe Cassay; that is to say, the 'City of heaven.' That city is well a fifty mile about, and it is strongly inhabited with people, insomuch that in one house men make ten households. In that city be twelve principal gates; and before every gate, a three mile or a four mile in length, is a great town or a great city. That city sits upon a great lake on the sea as doth Venice. And in that city be more than 12,000 bridges. And upon every bridge be strong towers and good, in the which dwell the wardens for to keep the city from the great Chan. And on that one part of the city runneth a great river all along the city. And there dwell Christian men and many merchants and other folk of diverse nations, because that the land is so good and so plenteous. And there groweth full good wine that men clepe Bigon, that is full mighty, and gentle in drinking. This is a city royal where the King of Mancy was wont to dwell. And there dwell many religious men, as it were of the Order of Friars, for they be mendicants.

From that city men go by water, solacing and disporting them, till they come to an abbey of monks that is fast by, that be good religious men after their faith and law. In that abbey is a great garden and p. 137
a fair, where be many trees of diverse manner of fruits. And in this garden is a little hill full of delectable trees. In that hill and in that garden be many diverse beasts, as of apes, marmosets, baboons and many other diverse beasts. And every day, when the convent of this abbey hath eaten, the almoner let bear the relief to the garden, and he smiteth on the garden gate with a clicket of silver that he holdeth in his hand; and anon all the beasts of the hill and of diverse places of the garden come out a 3000, or a 4000; and they come in guise of poor men, and men give them the relief in fair vessels of silver, clean over-gilt. And when they have eaten, the monk smiteth eftsoons on the garden gate with the clicket, and then anon all the beasts return again to their places that they come from. And they say that these beasts be souls of worthy men that resemble in likeness of those beasts that be fair, and therefore they give them meat for the love of God; and the other beasts that be foul, they say be souls of poor men and of rude commons. And thus they believe, and no man may put them out of this opinion. These beasts above-said they let take when they be young, and nourish them so with alms, as many as they may find. And I asked them if it had not been better to have given that relief to poor men, rather than to those beasts. And they answered me and said, that they had no poor men amongst them in that country; and though it had been so that poor men had been among them, yet were it greater alms to give it to those souls that do there their penance. Many other marvels be in that city and in the country thereabout, that were too long to tell you.

From that city go men by the country a six journeys to another city that men clepe Chilenfo, of the which city the walls be twenty mile about. In that city be sixty bridges of stone, so fair that no man may see fairer. In that city was the first siege of the King of Mancy, for it is a fair and plenteous of all goods.

After, pass men overthwart a great river that men clepe Dalay. And that is the greatest river of fresh p. 138
water that is in the world. For there, as it is most narrow, it is more than four mile of breadth. And then enter men again into the land of the great Chan.

That river goeth through the land of Pigmies, where that the folk be of little stature, that be but three span long, and they be right fair and gentle, after their quantities, both the men and the women. And they marry them when they be half year of age and get children. And they live not but six year or seven at the most; and he that liveth eight year, men hold him there right passing old. These men be the best workers of gold, silver, cotton, silk and of all such things, of any other that be in the world. And they have oftentimes war with the birds of the country that they take and eat. This little folk neither labour in lands ne in vines; but they have great men amongst them of our stature that till the land and labour amongst the vines for them. And of those men of our stature have they as great scorn and wonder as we would have among us of giants, if they were amongst us. There is a good city,

amongst others, where there is dwelling great plenty of those little folk, and it is a great city and a fair. And the men be great that dwell amongst them, but when they get any children they be as little as the pigmies. And therefore they be, all for the most part, all pigmies; for the nature of the land is such. The great Chan let keep this city full well, for it is his. And albeit, that the pigmies be little, yet they be full reasonable after their age, and can both wit and good and malice enough.

From that city go men by the country by many cities and many towns unto a city that men clepe Jamchay; and it is a noble city and a rich and of great profit to the Lord, and thither go men to seek merchandise of all manner of thing. That city is full much worth yearly to the lord of the country. For he hath every year to rent of that city (as they of the city say) 50,000 cumants of florins of gold: for they count there all by cumants, and every cumant is 10,000 florins of gold. Now may men well reckon how much that it amounteth. The king of that country is full mighty, and yet he is under the great Chan. And the great Chan hath under him twelve such provinces. In that country in the good towns is a good custom: for whoso will make a feast to any of his friends, there be certain inns in every good town, and he that will make the feast will say to the hosteler, array for me to-morrow a good dinner for so many folk, and telleth him the number, and deviseth him the viands; and he saith also, thus much I will dispend and no more. And anon the hosteler arrayeth for him so fair and so well and so honestly, that there shall lack nothing; and it shall be done sooner and with less cost than an a man made it in his own house. p. 139

And a five mile from that city, toward the head of the river of Dalay, is another city that men clepe Menke. In that city is strong navy of ships. And all be white as snow of the kind of the trees that they be made of. And they be full great ships and fair, and well ordained, and made with halls and chambers and other easements, as though it were on the land.

From thence go men, by many towns and many cities, through the country, unto a city that men clepe Lanterine. And it is an eight journeys from the city above-said. This city sits upon a fair river, great and broad, that men clepe Caramaron. This river passeth throughout Cathay. And it doth often-time harm, and that full great, when it is over great.

CHAPTER XXIII

Of the great Chan of Cathay. Of the royalty of his palace, and how he sits at meat; and of the great number of officers that serve him

Cathay is a great country and a fair, noble and rich, and full of merchants. Thither go merchants all years for to seek spices and all manner of merchandises, more commonly than in any other part. And ye shall understand, that merchants that come from Genoa or from Venice or from Romania or other parts of Lombardy, they go by sea and by land eleven months or twelve, or more some-time, ere they may come to the isle of Cathay that is the principal region of all parts beyond; and it is of the great Chan. p. 140

From Cathay go men toward the east by many journeys. And then men find a good city between these others, that men clepe Sugarmago. That city is one of the best stored of silk and other merchandises that is in the world.

After go men yet to another old city toward the east. And it is in the province of Cathay. And beside that city the men of Tartary have let make another city that is dept Caydon. And it hath twelve gates, and between the two gates there is always a great mile; so that the two cities, that is to say, the old and the new, have in circuit more than twenty mile.

In this city is the siege of the great Chan in a full great palace and the most passing fair in all the world, of the which the walls be in circuit more than two mile. And within the walls it is all full of other palaces. And in the garden of the great palace there is a great hill, upon the which there is another palace; and it is the most fair and the most rich that any man may devise. And all about the palace and the hill be many trees bearing many diverse fruits. And all about that hill be ditches great and deep, and beside them be great vivaries on that one part and on that other. And there is a full fair

bridge to pass over the ditches. And in these vivaries be so many wild geese and ganders and wild ducks and swans and herons that it is without number. And all about these ditches and vivaries is the great garden full of wild beasts. So that when the great Chan will have any disport on that, to take any of the wild beasts or of the fowls, he will let chase them and take them at the windows without going out of his chamber.

This palace, where his siege is, is both great and passing fair. And within the palace, in the hall, there p. 141
be twenty-four pillars of fine gold. And all the walls be covered within of red skins of beasts that men clepe panthers, that be fair beasts and well smelling; so that for the sweet odour of those skins no evil air may enter into the palace. Those skins be as red as blood, and they shine so bright against the sun, that unnethe no man may behold them. And many folk worship those beasts, when they meet them first at morning, for their great virtue and for the good smell that they have. And those skins they prize more than though they were plate of fine gold.

And in the midst of this palace is the mountour for the great Chan, that is all wrought of gold and of precious stones and great pearls. And at four corners of the mountour be four serpents of gold. And all about there is y-made large nets of silk and gold and great pearls hanging all about the mountour. And under the mountour be conduits of beverage that they drink in the emperor's court. And beside the conduits be many vessels of gold, by the which they that be of household drink at the conduit.

And the hall of the palace is full nobly arrayed, and full marvellously attired on all parts in all things that men apparel with any hall. And first, at the chief of the hall is the emperor's throne, full high, where he sitteth at the meat. And that is of fine precious stones, bordered all about with pured gold and precious stones, and great pearls. And the grees that he goeth up to the table be of precious stones mingled with gold.

And at the left side of the emperor's siege is the siege of his first wife, one degree lower than the emperor; and it is of jasper, bordered with gold and precious stones. And the siege of his second wife is also another siege, more lower than his first wife; and it is also of jasper, bordered with gold, as that other is. And the siege of the third wife is also more low, by a degree, than the second wife. For he hath always three wives with him, where that ever he be.

And after his wives, on the same side, sit the ladies of his lineage yet lower, after that they be of p. 142
estate. And all those that be married have a counterfeit made like a man's foot upon their heads, a cubit long, all wrought with great pearls, fine and orient, and above made with peacocks' feathers and of other shining feathers; and that stands upon their heads like a crest, in token that they be under man's foot and under subjection of man. And they that be unmarried have none such.

And after at the right side of the emperor first sitteth his eldest son that shall reign after him. And he sitteth also one degree lower than the emperor, in such manner of sieges as do the empresses. And after him sit other great lords of his lineage, every of them a degree lower than the other, as they be of estate.

And the emperor hath his table alone by himself, that is of gold and of precious stones, or of crystal bordered with gold, and full of precious stones or of amethysts, or of lignum aloes that cometh out of paradise, or of ivory bound or bordered with gold. And every one of his wives hath also her table by herself. And his eldest son and the other lords also, and the ladies, and all that sit with the emperor have tables alone by themselves, full rich. And there ne is no table but that it is worth an huge treasure of goods.

And under the emperor's table sit four clerks that write all that the emperor saith, be it good, be it evil; for all that he saith must be holden, for he may not change his word, ne revoke it.

And [at] great solemn feasts before the emperor's table men bring great tables of gold, and thereon be peacocks of gold and many other manner of diverse fowls, all of gold and richly wrought and enamelled. And men make them dance and sing, clapping their wings together, and make great noise. And whether it be by craft or by necromancy I wot never; but it is a good sight to behold, and a fair; and it is great marvel how it may be. But I have the less marvel, because that they be the most subtle men in all sciences and in all crafts that be in the world: for of subtlety and of malice and of farcasting they pass all men under heaven. And therefore they say themselves, that they see with two p. 143
eyes and the Christian men see but with one, because that they be more subtle than they. For all other

nations, they say, be but blind in cunning and working in comparison to them. I did great business for to have learned that craft, but the master told me that he had made avow to his god to teach it to no creature, but only to his eldest son.

Also above the emperor's table and the other tables, and above a great part in the hall, is a vine made of fine gold. And it spreadeth all about the hall. And it hath many clusters of grapes, some white, some green, some yellow and some red and some black, all of precious stones. The white be of crystal and of beryl and of iris; the yellow be of topazes; the red be of rubies and of grenaz and of alabrandines; the green be of emeralds, of perydoz and of chrysolites; and the black be of onyx and garantez. And they be all so properly made that it seemeth a very vine bearing kindly grapes.

And before the emperor's table stand great lords and rich barons and other that serve the emperor at the meat. And no man is so hardy to speak a word, but if the emperor speak to him; but if it be minstrels that sing songs and tell jests or other disports, to solace with the emperor. And all the vessels that men be served with in the hall or in chambers be of precious stones, and specially at great tables either of jasper or of crystal or of amethysts or of fine gold. And the cups be of emeralds and of sapphires, or of topazes, of perydoz, and of many other precious stones. Vessels of silver is there none, for they tell no price thereof to make no vessels of: but they make thereof grecings and pillars and pavements to halls and chambers. And before the hall door stand many barons and knights clean armed to keep that no man enter, but if it be the will or the commandment of the emperor, or but if they be servants or minstrels of the household; and other none is not so hardy to neighen nigh the hall door.

And ye shall understand, that my fellows and I with our yeomen, we served this emperor, and were his soldiers fifteen months against the King of Mancy, that held against him. And the cause was for p. 144
we had great lust to see his noblesse and the estate of his court and all his governance, to wit if it were such as we heard say that it was. And truly we found it more noble and more excellent, and richer and more marvellous, than ever we heard speak of, insomuch that we would never have lieved it had we not seen it. For I trow, that no man would believe the noblesse, the riches ne the multitude of folk that be in his court, but he had seen it; for it is not there as it is here. For the lords here have folk of certain number as they may suffice; but the great Chan hath every day folk at his costage and expense as without number. But the ordinance, ne the expenses in meat and drink, ne the honesty, ne the cleanness, is not so arrayed there as it is here; for all the commons there eat without cloth upon their knees, and they eat all manner of flesh and little of bread, and after meat they wipe their hands upon their skirts, and they eat not but once a day. But the estate of lords is full great, and rich and noble.

And albeit that some men will not trow me, but hold it for fable to tell them the noblesse of his person and of his estate and of his court and of the great multitude of folk that he holds, natheles I shall say you a part of him and of his folk, after that I have seen the manner and the ordinance full many a time. And whoso that will may lieve me if he will, and whoso will not, may leave also. For I wot well, if any man hath been in those countries beyond, though he have not been in the place where the great Chan dwelleth, he shall hear speak of him so much marvellous thing, that he shall not trow it lightly. And truly, no more did I myself, till I saw it. And those that have been in those countries and in the great Chan's household know well that I say sooth. And therefore I will not spare for them, that know not ne believe not but that that they see, for to tell you a part of him and of his estate that he holdeth, when he goeth from country to country, and when he maketh solemn feasts.

CHAPTER XXIV. p. 145

Wherefore he is clept the great Chan. Of the Style of his Letters: and of the Superscription about his great Seal and his Privy Seal

First I shall say you why he was clept the great Chan.

Ye shall understand, that all the world was destroyed by Noah's flood, save only Noah and his wife and his children. Noah had three sons, Shem, Cham, and Japhet. This Cham was he that saw his father's privy members naked when he slept, and scorned them, and shewed them with his finger to his brethren in scorning wise. And therefore he was cursed of God. And Japhet turned his face away and covered them.

These three brethren had seisin in all the land. And this Cham, for his cruelty, took the greater and the best part, toward the east, that is clept Asia, and Shem took Africa, and Japhet took Europe. And therefore is all the earth parted in these three parts by these three brethren. Cham was the greatest and the most mighty, and of him came more generations than of the other. And of his son Chuse was engendered Nimrod the giant, that was the first king that ever was in the world; and he began the foundation of the tower of Babylon. And that time, the fiends of hell came many times and lay with the women of his generation and engendered on them diverse folk, as monsters and folk disfigured, some without heads, some with great ears, some with one eye, some giants, some with horses' feet, and many other diverse shape against kind. And of that generation of Cham be come the Paynims and divers folk that be in isles of the sea by all Ind. And forasmuch as he was the most mighty, and no man might withstand him, he cleped himself the Son of God and sovereign of all the world. And for this Cham, this emperor clepeth him Cham, and sovereign of all the world.

And of the generation of Shem be come the Saracens. And of the generation of Japhet is come the people of Israel. And though that we dwell in Europe, this is the opinion, that the Syrians and the Samaritans have amongst them. And that they told me, before that I went toward Ind, but I found it otherwise. Natheles, the sooth is this; that Tartars and they that dwell in the great Asia, they came of Cham; but the Emperor of Cathay clepeth him not Cham, but Can, and I shall tell you how. p. 146

It is but little more but eight score year that all Tartary was in subjection and in servage to other nations about. For they were but bestial folk and did nothing but kept beasts and led them to pastures. But among them they had seven principal nations that were sovereigns of them all. Of the which, the first nation or lineage was clept Tartar, and that is the most noble and the most prized. The second lineage is clept Tanghot, the third Eurache, the fourth Valair, the fifth Semoche, the sixth Megly, the seventh Coboghe.

Now befell it so that of the first lineage succeeded an old worthy man that was not rich, that had to name Changuys. This man lay upon a night in his bed. And he saw in avision, that there came before him a knight armed all in white. And he sat upon a white horse, and said to him, Can, sleepest thou? The Immortal God hath sent me to thee, and it is his will, that thou go to the seven lineages and say to them that thou shalt be their emperor. For thou shalt conquer the lands and the countries that be about, and they that march upon you shall be under your subjection, as ye have been under theirs, for that is God's will immortal.

And when he came at morrow, Changuys rose, and went to seven lineages, and told them how the white knight had said. And they scorned him, and said that he was a fool. And so he departed from them all ashamed. And the night ensuing, this white knight came to the seven lineages, and commanded them on God's behalf immortal, that they should make this Changuys their emperor, and they should be out of subjection, and they should hold all other regions about them in their servage as they had been to them before. And on the morrow, they chose him to be their emperor. And they set him upon a black fertre, and after that they lift him up with great solemnity. And they set him in a chair of gold and did him all manner of reverence, and they cleped him Chan, as the white knight called him. p. 147

And when he was thus chosen, he would assay if he might trust in them or no, and whether they would be obeissant to him or no. And then he made many statutes and ordinances that they clepe *Ysya Chan*. The first statute was, that they should believe and obey in God Immortal, that is Almighty, that would cast them out of servage, and at all times clepe to him for help in time of need. The tother statute was, that all manner of men that might bare arms should be numbered, and to every ten should be a master, and to every hundred a master, and to every thousand a master, and to every ten thousand a master. After he commanded to the principals of the seven lineages, that they should leave and forsake all that they had in goods and heritage, and from thenceforth to hold them paid of that that he would give them of his grace. And they did so anon. After he commanded to the

principals of the seven lineages, that every of them should bring his eldest son before him, and with their own hands smite off their heads without tarrying. And anon his commandment was performed.

And when the Chan saw that they made none obstacle to perform his commandment, then he thought well that he might trust in them, and commanded them anon to make them ready and to sue his banner. And after this, Chan put in subjection all the lands about him.

Afterward it befell upon a day, that the Can rode with a few meinie for to behold the strength of the country that he had won. And so befell, that a great multitude of enemies met with him. And for to give good example hardiness to his people, he was the first that fought, and in the midst of his enemies encountered, and there he was cast from his horse, and his horse slain. And when his folk p. 148
saw him at the earth, they were all abashed, and weened he had been dead, and flew every one, and their enemies after and chased them, but they wist not that the emperor was there. And when the enemies were far pursuing the chase, the emperor hid him in a thick wood. And whet, they were come again from the chase, they went and sought the woods if any of them had been hid in the thick of the woods; and many they found and slew them anon. So it happened that as they went searching toward the place that the emperor was, they saw an owl sitting upon a tree above him; and then they said amongst them, that there was no man because that they saw that bird there, and so they went their way; and thus escaped the emperor from death. And then he went privily all by night, till he came to his folk that were full glad of his coming, and made great thankings to God Immortal, and to that bird by whom their lord was saved. And therefore principally above all fowls of world they worship the owl; and when they have any of their feathers, they keep them full preciously instead of relics, and bear them upon their heads with great reverence; and they hold themselves blessed and safe from all perils while that they have them upon them, and therefore they bear their feathers upon their heads.

After all this the Chan ordained him, and assembled his people, and went upon them that had assailed him before, and destroyed them, and put them in subjection and servage. And when he had won and put all the lands and countries on this half the Mount Belian in subjection, the white knight came to him again in his sleep, and said to him, Chan! the will of God Immortal is that thou pass the Mount Belian. And thou shalt win the land and thou shalt put many nations in subjection. And for thou shalt find no good passage for to go toward that country, go [to] the Mount Belian that is upon the sea, and kneel there nine times toward the east in the worship of God Immortal, and he shall shew the way to pass by. And the Chan did so. And anon the sea that touched and was fast to the mount began to withdraw him, and shewed fair way of nine foot breadth large; and so he passed with his folk, and won the land of Cathay that is the greatest kingdom of the world. p. 149

And for the nine kneelings and for the nine foot of way the Chan and all the men of Tartary have the number of nine in great reverence. And therefore who that will make the Chan any present, be it of horses, be it of birds, or of arrows or bows, or of fruit, or of any other thing, always he must make it of the number of nine. And so then be the presents of greater pleasure to him; and more benignly he will receive them than though he were presented with an hundred or two hundred. For him seemeth the number of nine so holy, because the messenger of God Immortal devised it.

Also, when the Chan of Cathay had won the country of Cathay, and put in subjection and under foot many countries about, he fell sick. And when he felt well that he should die, he said to his twelve sons, that everych of them should bring him one of his arrows. And so they did anon. And then he commanded that men should bind them together in three places. And then he took them to his eldest son, and bade him break them all together. And he enforced him with all his might to break them, but he ne might not. And then the Chan bade his second son to break them; and so, shortly, to all, each after other; but none of them might break them. And then he bade the youngest son dissever every one from other, and break everych by himself. And so he did. And then said the Chan to his eldest son and to all the others, Wherefore might ye not break them? And they answered that they might not, because that they were bound together. And wherefore, quoth he, hath your little youngest brother broken them? Because, quoth they, that they were parted each from other. And then said the Chan, My sons, quoth he, truly thus will it fare by you. For as long as ye be bound together in three places, that is to say, in love, in truth and in good accord, no man shall be of power to grieve you. But and ye be dissevered from these three places, that your one help not your other, ye shall be destroyed and brought to nought. And if each of you love other and help other, ye shall be lords and p. 150
sovereigns of all others. And when he had made his ordinances, he died.

And then after him reigned Ecchecha Cane, his eldest son. And his other brethren went to win them many countries and kingdoms, unto the land of Prussia and of Russia, and made themselves to be clept Chane; but they were all obeissant to their elder brother, and therefore was he clept the great Chan.

After Ecchecha reigned Guyo Chan.

And after him Mango Chan that was a good Christian man and baptized, and gave letters of perpetual peace to all Christian men, and sent his brother Halaon with great multitude of folk for to win the Holy Land and for to put it into Christian men's hands, and for to destroy Mahomet's law, and for to take the Caliph of Bagdad that was emperor and lord of all the Saracens. And when this caliph was taken, men found him of so high worship, that in all the remnant of the world, ne might a man find a more reverend man, ne higher in worship. And then Halaon made him come before him, and said to him, Why, quoth he, haddest thou not taken with thee more soldiers and men enough, for a little quantity of treasure, for to defend thee and thy country, that art so abundant of treasure and so high in all worship? And the caliph answered him, For he well trowed that he had enough of his own proper men. And then said Halaon, Thou wert as a god of the Saracens. And it is convenient to a god to eat no meat that is mortal. And therefore, thou shall not eat but precious stones, rich pearls and treasure, that thou lovest so much. And then he commanded him to prison, and all his treasure about him. And so he died for hunger and thirst. And then after this, Halaon won all the Land of Promission, and put it into Christian men's hands. But the great Chan, his brother, died; and that was great sorrow and loss to all Christian men.

After Mango Chan reigned Cobyla Chan that was also a Christian man. And he reigned forty-two year. He founded the great city Izonge in Cathay, that is a great deal more than Rome.

The tother great Chan that came after him became a Paynim, and all the others after him. p. 151

The kingdom of Cathay is the greatest realm of the world. And also the great Chan is the most mighty emperor of the world and the greatest lord under the firmament. And so he clepeth him in his letters, right thus: *Chan*! *Filius Dei excelsi*, *omnium universam terram colentium summus imperator*, *& dominus omnium dominantium*! And the letter of his great seal, written about, is this; *Deus in coelo*, *Chan super terram*, *ejus fortitudo*. *Omnium hominum imperatoris sigillum*. And the superscription about his little seal is this; *Dei fortitudo*, *omnium hominum imperatoris sigillum*.

And albeit that they be not christened, yet nevertheless the emperor and all the Tartars believe in God Immortal. And when they will menace any man, then they say, God knoweth well that I shall do thee such a thing, and telleth his menace.

And thus have ye heard, why he is clept the great Chan.

CHAPTER XXV

Of the Governance of the great Chan's Court, *and when he maketh solemn feasts*. *Of his Philosophers*. *And of his array*, *when he rideth by the country*

Now shall I tell you the governance of the court of the great Chan, when he maketh solemn feasts; and that is principally four times in the year.

The first feast is of his birth, that other is of his presentation in their temple that they clepe their Moseache, where they make a manner of circumcision, and the tother two feasts be of his idols. The first feast of the idol is when he is first put into their temple and throned; the tother feast is when the idol beginneth first to speak, or to work miracles. More be there not of solemn feasts, but if he marry any of his children. p. 152

Now understand, that at every of these feasts he hath great multitude of people, well ordained and well arrayed, by thousands, by hundreds, and by tens. And every man knoweth well what service he shall do, and every man giveth so good heed and so good attendance to his service that no man

findeth no default. And there be first ordained 4000 barons, mighty and rich, for to govern and to make ordinance for the feast, and for to serve the emperor. And these solemn feasts be made without in halls and tents made of cloths of gold and of tartaries, full nobly. And all those barons have crowns of gold upon their heads, full noble and rich, full of precious stones and great pearls orient. And they be all clothed in cloths of gold or of tartaries or of camakas, so richly and so perfectly, that no man in the world can amend it, ne better devise it. And all those robes be orfrayed all about, and dubbed full of precious stones and of great orient pearls, full richly. And they may well do so, for cloths of gold and of silk be greater cheap there a great deal than be cloths of wool. And these 4000 barons be devised in four companies, and every thousand is clothed in cloths all of one colour, and that so well arrayed and so richly, that it is marvel to behold.

The first thousand, that is of dukes, of earls, of marquises and of admirals, all clothed in cloths of gold, with tissues of green silk, and bordered with gold full of precious stones in manner as I have said before. The second thousand is all clothed in cloths diapered of red silk, all wrought with gold, and the orfrays set full of great pearl and precious stones, full nobly wrought. The third thousand is clothed in cloths of silk, of purple or of Ind. And the fourth thousand is in cloths of yellow. And all their clothes be so nobly and so richly wrought with gold and precious stones and rich pearls, that if a man of this country had but only one of their robes, he might well say that he should never be poor; for the gold and the precious stones and the great orient pearls be of greater value on this half the sea than they be beyond the sea in those countries. p. 153

And when they be thus apparelled, they go two and two together, full ordinately, before the emperor, without speech of any word, save only inclining to him. And every one of them beareth a tablet of jasper or of ivory or of crystal, and the minstrels going before them, sounding their instruments of diverse melody. And when the first thousand is thus passed and hath made his muster, he withdraweth him on that one side; and then entereth that other second thousand, and doth right so, in the same manner of array and countenance, is did the first; and after, the third; and then, the fourth; and none of them saith not one word.

And at one side of the emperor's table sit many philosophers that be proved for wise men in many diverse sciences, as of astronomy, necromancy, geomancy, pyromancy, hydromancy, of augury and of many other sciences. And everych of them have before them astrolabes of gold, some spheres, some the brain pan of a dead man, some vessels of gold full of gravel or sand, some vessels of gold full of coals burning, some vessels of gold full of water and of wine and of oil, and some horologes of gold, made full nobly and richly wrought, and many other manner of instruments after their sciences.

And at certain hours, when them thinketh time, they say to certain officers that stand before them, ordained for the time to fulfil their commandments; Make peace!

And then say the officers; Now peace! listen!

And after that, saith another of the philosophers; Every man do reverence and incline to the emperor, that is God's Son and sovereign lord of all the world! For now is time! And then every man boweth his head toward the earth.

And then commandeth the same philosopher again; Stand up! And they do so.

And at another hour, saith another philosopher; Put your little finger in your ears! And anon they do so. p. 154

And at another hour, saith another philosopher; Put your hand before your mouth! And anon they do so.

And at another hour, saith another philosopher; Put your hand upon your head! And after that he biddeth them to do their hand away. And they do so.

And so, from hour to hour, they command certain things; and they say, that those things have diverse significations. And I asked them privily what those things betokened. And one of the masters told me, that the bowing of the head at that hour betokened this; that all those that bowed their heads should evermore after be obeissant and true to the emperor, and never, for gifts ne for promise in no kind, to be false ne traitor unto him for good nor evil. And the putting of the little finger in the ear betokeneth, as they say, that none of them ne shall not hear speak no contrarious thing to the emperor

but that he shall tell it anon to his council or discover it to some men that will make relation to the emperor, though he were his father or brother or son. And so forth, of all other things that is done by the philosophers, they told me the causes of many diverse things. And trust right well in certain, that no man doth nothing to the emperor that belongeth unto him, neither clothing ne bread ne wine ne bath ne none other thing that longeth to him, but at certain hours that his philosophers will devise. And if there fall war in any side to the emperor, anon the philosophers come and say their advice after their calculations, and counsel the emperor of their advice by their sciences; so that the emperor doth nothing without their counsel.

And when the philosophers have done and performed their commandments, then the minstrels begin to do their minstrelsy, everych in their instruments, each after other, with all the melody that they can devise. And when they have done a good while, one of the officers of the emperor goeth up on a high stage wrought full curiously, and crieth and saith with loud voice; Make Peace! And then every man is still.

And then, anon after, all the lords that be of the emperor's lineage, nobly arrayed in rich cloths of gold and royally apparelled on white steeds, as many as may well sue him at that time, be ready to p. 155 make their presents to the emperor. And then saith the steward of the court to the lords, by name; N. of N.! and nameth first the most noble and the worthiest by name, and saith; Be ye ready with such a number of white horses, for to serve the emperor, your sovereign lord! And to another lord he saith; N. of N., be ye ready with such a number, to serve your sovereign lord! And to another, right so, and to all the lords of the emperor's lineage, each after other, as they be of estate. And when they be all cleped, they enter each after other, and present the white horses to the emperor, and then go their way. And then after, all the other barons every of them, give him presents or jewels or some other thing, after that they be of estate. And then after them, all the prelates of their law, and religious men and others; and every man giveth him something. And when that all men have thus presented the emperor, the greatest of dignity of the prelates giveth him a blessing, saying an orison of their law.

And then begin the minstrels to make their minstrelsy in divers instruments with all the melody that they can devise. And when they have done their craft, then they bring before the emperor, lions, leopards and other diverse beasts, and eagles and vultures and other divers fowls, and fishes and serpents, for to do him reverence. And then come jugglers and enchanters, that do many marvels; for they make to come in the air, by seeming, the sun and the moon to every man's sight. And after they make the night so dark that no man may see nothing. And after they make the day to come again, fair and pleasant with bright sun, to every man's sight. And then they bring in dances of the fairest damsels of the world, and richest arrayed. And after they make to come in other damsels bringing cups of gold full of milk of diverse beasts, and give drink to lords and to ladies. And then they make knights to joust in arms full lustily; and they run together a great random, and they frussch together full fiercely, and they break their spears so rudely that the truncheons fly in sprouts and pieces all about the hall. And then they make to come in hunting for the hart and for the boar, with hounds p. 156 running with open mouth. And many other things they do by craft of their enchantments, that it is marvel for to see. And such plays of disport they make till the taking up of the boards. This great Chan hath full great people for to serve him, as I have told you before. For he hath of minstrels the number of thirteen cumants, but they abide not always with him. For all the minstrels that come before him, of what nation that they be of, they be withholden with him as of his household, and entered in his books as for his own men. And after that, where that ever they go, ever more they claim for minstrels of the great Chan; and under that title, all kings and lords cherish them the more with gifts and all things. And therefore he hath so great multitude of them.

And he hath of certain men as though they were yeomen, that keep birds, as ostriches, gerfalcons, sparrow-hawks, falcons gentle, lanyers, sakers, sakrets, popinjays well speaking, and birds singing, and also of wild beasts, as of elephants tame and other, baboons, apes, marmosets, and other diverse beasts; the mountance of fifteen cumants of yeomen.

And of physicians Christian he hath 200, and of leeches that be Christian he hath 210, and of leeches and physicians that be Saracens twenty, but he trusteth more in the Christian leeches than in the Saracen. And his other common household is without number, and they all have all necessaries and all that them needeth of the emperor's court. And he hath in his court many barons as servitors, that be Christian and converted to good faith by the preaching of religious Christian men that dwell with him; but there be many more, that will not that men know that they be Christian.

This emperor may dispend as much as he will without estimation; for he not dispendeth ne maketh no money but of leather imprinted or of paper. And of that money is some of greater price and some of less price, after the diversity of his statutes. And when that money hath run so long that it beginneth p. 157
to waste, then men bear it to the emperor's treasury and then they take new money for the old. And that money goeth throughout all the country and throughout all his provinces, for there and beyond them they make no money neither of gold nor of silver; and therefore he may dispend enough, and outrageously. And of gold and silver that men bear in his country he maketh cylours, pillars and pavements in his palace, and other diverse things what him liketh.

This emperor hath in his chamber, in one of the pillars of gold, a ruby and a carbuncle of half a foot long, that in the night giveth so great clearness and shining, that it is as light as day. And he hath many other precious stones and many other rubies and carbuncles; but those be the greatest and the most precious.

This emperor dwelleth in summer in a city that is toward the north that is clept Saduz; and there is cold enough. And in winter he dwelleth in a city that is clept Camaaleche, and that is an hot country. But the country, where he dwelleth in most commonly, is in Gaydo or in Jong, that is a good country and a temperate, after that the country is there; but to men of this country it were too passing hot.

And when this emperor will ride from one country to another he ordaineth four hosts of his folk, of the which the first host goeth before him a day's journey. For that host shall be lodged the night where the emperor shall lie upon the morrow. And there shall every man have all manner of victual and necessaries that be needful, of the emperor's costage. And in this first host is the number of people fifty cumants, what of horse what of foot, of the which every cumant amounteth 10,000 as I have told you before. And another host goeth in the right side of the emperor, nigh half a journey from him. And another goeth on the left side of him, in the same wise. And in every host is as much multitude of people as in the first host. And then after cometh the fourth host, that is much more than any of the others, and that goeth behind him, the mountance of a bow draught. And every host hath his journeys ordained in certain places, where they shall be lodged at night, and there they shall have p. 158
all that them needeth. And if it befall that any of the host die, anon they put another in his place, so that the number shall evermore be whole.

And ye shall understand, that the emperor, in his proper person, rideth not as other great lords do beyond, but if he list to go privily with few men, for to be unknown. And else, he rides in a chariot with four wheels, upon the which is made a fair chamber, and it is made of a certain wood, that cometh out of Paradise terrestrial, that men clepe lignum aloes, that the floods of Paradise bring out at divers seasons, as I have told you here before. And this chamber is full well smelling because of the wood that it is made of. And all this chamber is covered within of plate of fine gold dubbed with precious stones and great pearls. And four elephants and four great destriers, all white and covered with rich covertures, leading the chariot. And four, or five, or six, of the greatest lords ride about this chariot, full richly arrayed and full nobly, so that no man shall neigh the chariot, but only those lords, but if that the emperor call any man to him that him list to speak withal. And above the chamber of this chariot that the emperor sitteth in be set upon a perch four or five or six gerfalcons, to that intent, that when the emperor seeth any wild fowl, that he may take it at his own list, and have the disport and the play of the flight, first with one, and after with another; and so he taketh his disport passing by the country. And no man rideth before him of his company, but all after him. And no man dare not come nigh the chariot, by a bow draught, but those lords only that be about him. And all the host cometh fairly after him in great multitude.

And also such another chariot with such hosts ordained and arrayed go with the empress upon another side, everych by himself, with four hosts, right as the emperor did; but not with so great multitude of people. And his eldest son goeth by another way in another chariot, in the same manner. So that there is between them so great multitude of folk that it is marvel to tell it. And no p. 159
man should trow the number, but he had seen it. And some-time it happeth that when he will not go far, and that it like him to have the empress and his children with him, then they go altogether, and their folk be all mingled in fere, and divided in four parties only.

And ye shall understand, that the empire of this great Chan is divided in twelve provinces; and every province hath more than two thousand cities, and of towns without number. This country is full great, for it hath twelve principal kings in twelve provinces, and every of those Kings have many

kings under them, and all they be obeissant to the great Chan. And his land and his lordship dureth so far, that a man may not go from one head to another, neither by sea ne land, the space of seven year. And through the deserts of his lordship, there as men may find no towns, there be inns ordained by every journey, to receive both man and horse, in the which they shall find plenty of victual, and of all things that they need for to go by the country.

And there is a marvellous custom in that country (but it is profitable), that if any contrarious thing that should be prejudice or grievance to the emperor in any kind, anon the emperor hath tidings thereof and full knowledge in a day, though it be three or four journeys from him or more. For his ambassadors take their dromedaries or their horses, and they prick in all that ever they may toward one of the inns. And when they come there, anon they blow an horn. And anon they of the inn know well enough that there be tidings to warn the emperor of some rebellion against him. And then anon they make other men ready, in all haste that they may, to bear letters, and prick in all that ever they may, till they come to the other inns with their letters. And then they make fresh men ready, to prick forth with the letters toward the emperor, while that the last bringer rest him, and bait his dromedary or his horse. And so, from inn to inn, till it come to the emperor. And thus anon hath he hasty tidings of anything that beareth charge, by his couriers, that run so hastily throughout all the country. And p. 160
also when the Emperor sendeth his couriers hastily throughout his land, every one of them hath a large throng full of small bells, and when they neigh near to the inns of other couriers that be also ordained by the journeys, they ring their bells, and anon the other couriers make them ready, and run their way unto another inn. And thus runneth one to other, full speedily and swiftly, till the emperor's intent be served, in all haste. And these couriers be clept *Chydydo*, after their language, that is to say, a messenger,

Also when the emperor goeth from one country to another, as I have told you here before, and he pass through cities and towns, every man maketh a fire before his door, and putteth therein powder of good gums that be sweet smelling, for to make good savour to the emperor. And all the people kneel down against him, and do him great reverence. And there, where religious Christian men dwell, as they do in many cities in the land, they go before him with procession with cross and holy water, and they sing, *Veni creator spiritus*! with an high voice, and go towards him. And when he heareth them, he commandeth to his lords to ride beside him, that the religious men may come to him. And when they be nigh him with the cross, then he doth adown his galiot that sits on his head in manner of a chaplet, that is made of gold and precious stones and great pearls, and it is so rich, that men prize it to the value of a realm in that country. And then he kneeleth to the cross. And then the prelate of the religious men saith before him certain orisons, and giveth him a blessing with the cross; and he inclineth to the blessing full devoutly. And then the prelate giveth him some manner fruit, to the number of nine, in a platter of silver, with pears or apples, or other manner fruit. And he taketh one. And then men give to the other lords that be about him. For the custom is such, that no stranger shall come before him, but if he give him some manner thing, after the old law that saith, *Nemo accedat in conspectu meo vacuus*. And then the emperor saith to the religious men, that they withdraw them again, that they be neither hurt nor harmed of the great multitude of horses that come behind him. p. 161
And also, in the same manner, do the religious men that dwell there, to the empresses that pass by them, and to his eldest son. And to every of them they present fruit.

And ye shall understand, that the people that he hath so many hosts of, about him and about his wives and his soil, they dwell not continually with him. But always, when him liketh, they be sent for. And after, when they have done, they return to their own households, save only they that be dwelling with him in household for to serve him and his wives and his sons for to govern his household. And albeit, that the others be departed from him after that they have performed their service, yet there abideth continually with him in court 50,000 men at horse and 200,000 men a foot, without minstrels and those that keep wild beasts and divers birds, of the which I have told you the number before.

Under the firmament is not so great a lord, ne so mighty, ne so rich as is the great Chan; not Prester John, that is emperor of the high Ind, ne the Soldan of Babylon, ne the Emperor of Persia. All these ne be not in comparison to the great Chan, neither of might, ne of noblesse, ne of royalty, ne of riches; for in all these he passeth all earthly princes. Wherefore it is great harm that he believeth not faithfully in God. And natheles he will gladly hear speak of God. And he suffereth well that Christian men dwell in his lordship, and that men of his faith be made Christian men if they will, throughout all his country; for he defendeth no man to hold no law other than him liketh.

In that country some men hath an hundred wives, some sixty, some more, some less. And they take the next of their kin to their wives, save only that they out-take their mothers, their daughters, and their sisters of the mother's side; but their sisters on the father's side of another woman they may well take, and their brothers' wives also after their death, and their step-mothers also in the same wise.

CHAPTER XXVI

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Of the Law and the Customs of the Tartarians dwelling in Cathay. And how that men do when the Emperor shall die, and how he shall be chosen

THE folk of that country use all long clothes without furs. And they be clothed with precious cloths of Tartary, and of cloths of gold. And their clothes be slit at the side, and they be fastened with laces of silk. And they clothe them also with pilches, and the hide without; and they use neither cape ne hood. And in the same manner as the men go, the women go, so that no man may unneth know the men from the women, save only those women that be married, that bear the token upon their heads of a man's foot, in sign that they be under man's foot and under subjection of man.

And their wives ne dwell not together, but every of them by herself; and the husband may lie with whom of them that him liketh. Everych hath his house, both man and woman. And their houses be made round of staves, and it hath a round window above that giveth them light, and also that serveth for deliverance of smoke. And the heling of their houses and the walls and the doors be all of wood. And when they go to war, they lead their houses with them upon chariots, as men do tents or pavilions. And they make their fire in the midst of their houses.

And they have great multitude of all manner of beasts, save only of swine, for they bring none forth. And they believe well one God that made and formed all things. And natheles yet have they idols of gold and silver, and of tree and of cloth. And to those idols they offer always their first milk of their beasts, and also of their meats and of their drinks before they eat. And they offer often-times horses and beasts. And they clepe the God of kind *Yroga*.

And their emperor also, what name that ever he have, they put evermore thereto, Chan. And when I was there, their emperor had to name Thiaut, so that he was clept Thiaut-Chan. And his eldest son p. 163
was clept Tossue; and when he shall be emperor, he shall be clept Tossue-Chan. And at that time the emperor had twelve sons without him, that were named Cuncy, Ordii, Chadahay, Buryn, Negu, Nocab, Cadu, [Siban], Cuten, Balacy, Babylan, and Garegan. And of his three wives, the first and principal, that was Prester John's daughter, had to name Serioche-Chan, and the tother Borak-Chan, and the tother Karanke-Chan.

The folk of that country begin all their things in the new moon, and they worship much the moon and the sun and often-time kneel against them. And all the folk of the country ride commonly without spurs, but they bear always a little whip in their hands for to chace with their horses.

And they have great conscience and hold it for a great sin to cast a knife in the fire, and for to draw flesh out of a pot with a knife, and for to smite an horse with the handle of a whip, or to smite an horse with a bridle, or to break one bone with another, or for to cast milk or any liquor that men may drink upon the earth, or for to take and slay little children. And the most sin that any man may do is to piss in their houses that they dwell in, and whoso that may be found with that sin sikerly they slay him. And of everych of these sins it behoveth them to be shriven of their priests, and to pay great sum of silver for their penance. And it behoveth also, that the place that men have pissed in be hallowed again, and else dare no man enter therein. And when they have paid their penance, men make them pass through a fire or through two, for to cleanse them of their sins. And also when any messenger cometh and bringeth letters or any present to the emperor, it behoveth him that he, with the thing that he bringeth, pass through two burning fires for to purge them, that he bring no poison ne venom, ne no wicked thing that might be grievance to the Lord. And also if any man or woman be taken in avoutry or fornication, anon they slay him. And who that stealeth anything, anon they slay him.

Men of that country be all good archers and shoot right well, both men and women, as well on horse- p. 164
back, pricking, as on foot, running. And the women make all things and all manner mysteries and crafts, as of clothes, boots and other things; and they drive carts, ploughs and wains and chariots; and they make houses and all manner mysteres, out taken bows and arrows and armours that men make. And all the women wear breeches, as well as men.

All the folk of that country be full obeissant to their sovereigns; ne they fight not, ne chide not one with another. And there be neither thieves ne robbers in that country. And every man worshippeth other; but no man there doth no reverence to no strangers, but if they be great princes.

And they eat hounds, lions, leopards, mares and foals, asses, rats and mice and all manner of beasts, great and small, save only swine and beasts that were defended by the old law. And they eat all the beasts without and within, without casting away of anything, save only the filth. And they eat but little bread, but if it be in courts of great lords. And they have not in many places, neither pease ne beans ne none other pottages but the broth of the flesh. For little eat they anything but flesh and the broth. And when they have eaten, they wipe their hands upon their skirts; for they use no napery ne towels, but if it be before great lords; but the common people hath none. And when they have eaten, they put their dishes unwashen into the pot or cauldron with remnant of the flesh and of the broth till they will eat again. And the rich men drink milk of mares or of camels or of asses or of other beasts. And they will be lightly drunken of milk and of another drink that is made of honey and of water sodden together; for in that country is neither wine ne ale. They live full wretchedly, and they eat but once in the day, and that but little, neither in courts ne in other places. And in sooth, one man alone in this country will eat more in a day than one of them will eat in three days. And if any strange messenger come there to a lord, men make him to eat but once a day, and that full little.

And when they war, they war full wisely and always do their business, to destroy their enemies. p. 165
Every man there beareth two bows or three, and of arrows great plenty, and a great axe. And the gentles have short spears and large and full trenchant on that one side. And they have plates and helms made of quyrboylle, and their horses covertures of the same. And whoso fleeth from the battle they slay him. And when they hold any siege about castle or town that is walled and defensible, they behote to them that be within to do all the profit and good, that it is marvel to hear; and they grant also to them that be within all that they will ask them. And after that they be yielden, anon they slay them all; and cut off their ears and souse them in vinegar, and thereof they make great service for lords. All their lust and all their imagination is for to put all lands under their subjection. And they say that they know well by their prophecies, that they shall be overcome by archers and by strength of them; but they know not of what nation ne of what law they shall be of, that shall overcome them. And therefore they suffer that folk of all laws may peaceably dwell amongst them.

Also when they will make their idols or an image of any of their friends for to have remembrance of him, they make always the image all naked without any manner of clothing. For they say that in good love should be no covering, that man should not love for the fair clothing ne for the rich array, but only for the body, such as God hath made it, and for the good virtues that the body is endowed with of Nature, not only for fair clothing that is not of kindly Nature.

And ye shall understand that it is great dread for to pursue the Tartars if they flee in battle. For in fleeing they shoot behind them and slay both men and horses. And when they will fight they will shock them together in a plump; that if there be 20,000 men, men shall not ween that there be scant 10,000. And they can well win land of strangers, but they cannot keep it; for they have greater lust to lie in tents without than for to lie in castle or in towns. And they prize nothing the wit of other p. 166
nations.

And amongst them oil of olive is full dear, for they hold it for full noble medicine. And all the Tartars have small eyen and little of beard, and not thick haired but shear. And they be false and traitors; and they last nought that they behote. They be full hardy folk, and much pain and woe may suffer and disease, more than any other folk, for they be taught thereto in their own country of youth. And therefore they spend as who saith, right nought.

And when any man shall die, men set a spear beside him. And when he draweth towards the death, every man fleeth out of the house till he be dead. And after that they bury him in the fields.

And when the emperor dieth, men set him in a chair in midst the place of his tent. And men set a table before him clean, covered with a cloth, and thereupon flesh and diverse viands and a cup full of mare's milk. And men put a mare beside him with her foal, and an horse saddled and bridled. And they lay upon the horse gold and silver, great quantity. And they put about him great plenty of straw. And then men make a great pit and a large, and with the tent and all these other things they put him in earth. And they say that when he shall come into another world, he shall not be without an house, ne without horse, ne without gold and silver; and the mare shall give him milk, and bring him forth more horses till he be well stored in the tother world. For they trow that after their death they shall be eating and drinking in that other world, and solacing them with their wives, as they did here.

And after time that the emperor is thus interred no man shall be so hardy to speak of him before his friends. And yet natheles, sometime falleth of many that they make him to be interred privily by night in wild places, and put again the grass over the pit for to grow; or else men cover the pit with gravel and sand, that no man shall perceive where, ne know where, the pit is, to that intent that never after none of his friends shall have mind ne remembrance of him. And then they say that he is ravished into another world, where he is a greater lord than he was here. p. 167

And then, after the death of the emperor, the seven lineages assemble them together, and choose his eldest son, or the next after him of his blood. And thus they say to him; we will and we pray and ordain that ye be our lord and our emperor.

And then he answereth, If ye will that I reign over you as lord, do everych of you that I shall command him, either to abide or to go; and whomsoever that I command to be slain, that anon he be slain.

And they answer all with one voice, Whatsoever ye command, it shall be done.

Then saith the emperor, Now understand well, that my word from henceforth is sharp and biting as a sword.

After, men set him upon a black steed and so men bring him to a chair full richly arrayed, and there they crown him. And then all the cities and good towns send him rich presents. So that at that journey he shall have more than sixty chariots charged with gold silver, without jewels of gold and precious stones, that lords gave him, that be without estimation, and without horses, and cloths of gold, and of camakas, and tartarins that be without number.

CHAPTER XXVII

Of the Realm of Tharse and the Lands and Kingdoms towards the Septentrional Parts, in coming down from the land of Cathay

This land of Cathay is in Asia the deep; and after, on this half, is Asia the more. The kingdom of Cathay marcheth toward the west unto the kingdom of Tharse, the which was one of the kings that came to present our Lord in Bethlehem. And they that be of the lineage of that king are some Christian. In Tharse they eat no flesh, ne they drink no wine. p. 168

And on this half, toward the west, is the kingdom of Turkestan, that stretcheth him toward the west to the kingdom of Persia, and toward the septentrional to the kingdom of Khorasan. In the country of Turkestan be but few good cities; but the best city of that land hight Octorar. There be great pastures, but few corns; and therefore, for the most part, they be all herdsmen, and they lie in tents and they drink a manner ale made of honey.

And after, on this half, is the kingdom of Khorasan, that is a good land and a plenteous, without wine. And it hath a desert toward the east that lasteth more than an hundred journeys. And the best city of that country is clept Khorasan, and of that city beareth the country his name. The folk of that country be hardy warriors.

And on this half is the kingdom of Comania, whereof the Comanians that dwelled in Greece sometime were chased out. This is one of the greatest kingdoms of the world, but it is not all inhabited. For at one of the parts there is so great cold that no man may dwell there; and in another part there is so great heat that no man may endure it, and also there be so many flies, that no man may know on what side he may turn him. In that country is but little arboury ne trees that bear fruit ne other. They lie in tents; and they burn the dung of beasts for default of wood. This kingdom descendeth on this half toward us and toward Prussia and toward Russia.

And through that country runneth the river of Ethille that is one of the greatest rivers of the world. And it freezeth so strongly all years that many times men have fought upon the ice with great hosts, both parties on foot, and their horses voided for the time, and what on horse and on foot, more than 200,000 persons on every side.

And between that river and the great sea Ocean, that they clepe the Sea Maure, lie all these realms. p. 169
And toward the head, beneath, in that realm is the Mount Chotaz, that is the highest mount of the world, and it is between the Sea Maure and the Sea Caspian. There is full strait and dangerous passage for to go toward Ind. And therefore King Alexander let make there a strong city, that men clepe Alexandria, for to keep the country that no man should pass without his leave. And now men clepe that city, the Gate of Hell.

And the principal city of Comania is clept Sarak, that is one of the three ways for to go into Ind. But by that way, ne may not pass no great multitude of people, but if it be in winter. And that passage men clepe the Derbent. The tother way is for to go from the city of Turkestan by Persia, and by that way be many journeys by desert. And the third way is that cometh from Comania and then to go by the Great Sea and by the kingdom of Abchaz.

And ye shall understand, that all these kingdoms and all these lands above-said unto Prussia and to Russia be all obeissant to the great Chan of Cathay, and many other countries that march to other coasts. Wherefore his power and his lordship is full great and full mighty.

CHAPTER XXVIII

The Emperor of Persia, and of the Land of Darkness; and of other kingdoms that belong to the great Chan of Cathay, and other lands of his, unto the sea of Greece

Now, since I have devised you the lands and the kingdoms toward the parts Septentrionals in coming down from the land of Cathay unto the lands of the Christian, towards Prussia and Russia,—now shall I devise you of other lands and kingdoms coming down by other coasts, toward the right side, unto the sea of Greece, toward the land of Christian men. And, therefore, that after Ind and after p. 170
Cathay the Emperor of Persia is the greatest lord, therefore, I shall tell you of the kingdom of Persia.

First, where he hath two kingdoms, the first kingdom beginneth toward the east, toward the kingdom of Turkestan, and it stretcheth toward the west unto the river of Pison, that is one of the four rivers that come out of Paradise. And on another side it stretcheth toward the Septentrion unto the sea of Caspian; and also toward the south unto the desert of Ind. And this country is good and plain and full of people. And there be many good cities. But the two principal cities be these, Boyturra, and Seornergant, that some men clepe Sormagant. The tother kingdom of Persia stretcheth toward the river of Pison and the parts of the west unto the kingdom of Media, and from the great Armenia and toward the Septentrion to the sea of Caspian and toward the south to the land of Ind. That is also a good land and a plenteous, and it hath three great principal cities—Messabor, Saphon, and Sarmassan.

And then after is Armenia, in the which were wont to be four kingdoms; that is a noble country and full of goods. And it beginneth at Persia and stretcheth toward the west in length unto Turkey. And in largeness it dureth to the city of Alexandria, that now is clept the Gate of Hell, that I spake of before, under the kingdom of Media. In this Armenia be full many good cities, but Taurizo is most of name.

After this is the kingdom of Media, that is full long, but it is not full large, that beginneth toward the east to the land of Persia and to Ind the less; and it stretcheth toward the west, toward the kingdom of Chaldea and toward the Septentrion, descending toward the little Armenia. In that kingdom of Media there be many great hills and little of plain earth. There dwell Saracens and another manner of folk, that men clepe Cordynes. The best two cities of that kingdom be Sarras and Karemen.

After that is the kingdom of Georgia, that beginneth toward the east to the great mountain that is clept Abzor, where that dwell many diverse folk of diverse nations. And men clepe the country Alamo. p. 171
This kingdom stretcheth him towards Turkey and toward the Great Sea, and toward the south it marcheth to the great Armenia. And there be two kingdoms in that country; that one is the kingdom of Georgia, and that other is the kingdom of Abchaz. And always in that country be two kings; and they be both Christian. But the king of Georgia is in subjection to the great Chan. And the king of Abchaz hath the more strong country, and he always vigorously defendeth his country against all those that assail him, so that no man may make him in subjection to no man.

In that kingdom of Abchaz is a great marvel. For a province of the country that hath well in circuit three journeys, that men clepe Hanyson, is all covered with darkness, without any brightness or light; so that no man may see ne hear, ne no man dare enter into him. And, natheles, they of the country say, that some-times men hear voice of folk, and horses neighing, and cocks crowing. And men wit well, that men dwell there, but they know not what men. And they say, that the darkness befell by miracle of God. For a cursed emperor of Persia, that hight Saures, pursued all Christian men to destroy them and to compel them to make sacrifice to his idols, and rode with great host, in all that ever he might, for to confound the Christian men. And then in that country dwelled many good Christian men, the which that left their goods and would have fled into Greece. And when they were in a plain that hight Megon, anon this cursed emperor met with them with his host for to have slain them and hewn them to pieces. And anon the Christian men kneeled to the ground, and made their prayers to God to succour them. And anon a great thick cloud came and covered the emperor and all his host. And so they endure in that manner that they ne may not go out on no side; and so shall they evermore abide in that darkness till the day of doom, by the miracle of God. And then the Christian men went where them liked best, at their own pleasance, without letting of any creature, and their p. 172
enemies enclosed and confounded in darkness, without any stroke.

Wherefore we may well say with David, *A Domino factum est istud*; *& est mirabile in oculis nostris*. And that was a great miracle, that God made for them. Wherefore methinketh that Christian men should be more devout to serve our Lord God than any other men of any other sect. For without any dread, ne were not cursedness and sin of Christian men, they should be lords of all the world. For the banner of Jesu Christ is always displayed, and ready on all sides to the help of his true loving servants. Insomuch, that one good Christian man in good belief should overcome and out-chase a thousand cursed misbelieving men, as David saith in the Psalter, *Quoniam persequebatur unus mills*, *& duo fugarent decem milia*; *et cadent a latere tuo mille*, *& decem milia a dextris tuis*. And how that it might be that one should chase a thousand, David himself saith following, *Quia manus Domini fecit haec omnia*, and our Lord himself saith, by the prophet's mouth, *Si in viis meis ambulaveritis*, *super tribulantes vos misissem manum meam*. So that we may see apertly that if we will be good men, no enemy may not endure against us.

Also ye shall understand that out of that land of darkness goeth out a great river that sheweth well that there be folk dwelling, by many ready tokens; but no man dare not enter into it.

And wit well, that in the kingdoms of Georgia, of Abchaz and of the little Armenia be good Christian men and devout. For they shrive them and housel them evermore once or twice in the week. And there be many of them that housel them every day; and so do we not on this half, albeit that Saint Paul commandeth it, saying, *Omnibus diebus dominicis ad communicandum hortor*. They keep that commandment, but we ne keep it not.

Also after, on this half, is Turkey, that marcheth to the great Armenia. And there be many provinces, as Cappadocia, Saure, Brique, Quesiton, Pytan, and Gemethe. And in everych of these be many good cities. This Turkey stretcheth unto the city of Sachala that sitteth upon the sea of Greece, and so it p. 173
marcheth to Syria. Syria is a great country and a good, as I have told you before. And also it hath, above toward Ind, the kingdom of Chaldea, that stretcheth from the mountains of Chaldea toward the east unto the city of Nineveh, that sitteth upon the river of Tigris; and in largeness it beginneth toward

the north to the city of Maraga; and it stretcheth toward the south unto the sea Ocean. In Chaldea is a plain country, and few hills and few rivers.

After is the kingdom of Mesopotamia, that beginneth, toward the east, to the flom of Tigris, unto a city that is clept Mosul; and it stretcheth toward the west to the flom of Euphrates unto a city that is clept Roianz; and in length it goeth to the mount of Armenia unto the desert of Ind the less. This is a good country and a plain, but it hath few rivers. It hath but two mountains in that country, of the which one hight Symar and that other Lyson. And this land marcheth to the kingdom of Chaldea.

Yet there is, toward the parts Meridionals many countries and many regions, as the land of Ethiopia, that marcheth, toward the east to the great deserts, toward the west to the kingdom of Nubia, toward the south to the kingdom of Moretane, and toward the north to the Red Sea.

After is Moretane, that dureth from the mountains of Ethiopia unto Lybia the high. And that country lieth along from the sea ocean toward the south; and toward the north it marcheth to Nubia and to the high Lybia. (These men of Nubia be Christian.) And it marcheth from the lands above-said to the deserts of Egypt, and that is the Egypt that I have spoken of before.

And after is Lybia the high and Lybia the low, that descendeth down low toward the great sea of Spain, in the which country be many kingdoms and many diverse folk.

Now I have devised you many countries on this half the kingdom of Cathay, of the which many be obeissant to the great Chan.

CHAPTER XXIX

p. 174

Of the Countries and Isles that be beyond the Land of Cathay; *and of the fruits there*; *and of twenty-two kings enclosed within the mountains*

Now shall I say you, suingly, of countries and isles that be beyond the countries that I have spoken of.

Wherefore I say you, in passing by the land of Cathay toward the high Ind and toward Bacharia, men pass by a kingdom that men clepe Caldilhe, that is a full fair country.

And there groweth a manner of fruit, as though it were gourds. And when they be ripe, men cut them a-two, and men find within a little beast, in flesh, in bone, and blood, as though it were a little lamb without wool. And men eat both the fruit and the beast. And that is a great marvel. Of that fruit I have eaten, although it were wonderful, but that I know well that God is marvellous in his works. And, natheles, I told them of as great a marvel to them, that is amongst us, and that was of the Bernakes. For I told them that in our country were trees that bear a fruit that become birds flying, and those that fell in the water live, and they that fall on the earth die anon, and they be right good to man's meat. And hereof had they as great marvel, that some of them trowed it were an impossible thing to be.

In that country be long apples of good savour, whereof be more than an hundred in a cluster, and as many in another; and they have great long leaves and large, of two foot long or more. And in that country, and in other countries thereabout, grow many trees that bear clove-gylofres and nutmegs, and great nuts of Ind, and of Canell and of many other spices. And there be vines that bear so great grapes, that a strong man should have enough to do for to bear one cluster with all the grapes.

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In that same region be the mountains of Caspian that men clepe Uber in the country. Between those mountains the Jews of ten lineages be enclosed, that men clepe Goth and Magoth and they may not go out on no side. There were enclosed twenty-two kings with their people, that dwelled between the mountains of Scythia. There King Alexander chased them between those mountains, and there he thought for to enclose them through work of his men. But when he saw that he might not do it, ne bring it to an end, he prayed to God of nature that he would perform that that he had begun. And all were it so, that he was a paynim and not worthy to be heard, yet God of his grace closed the

mountains together, so that they dwell there all fast locked and enclosed with high mountains all about, save only on one side, and on that side is the sea of Caspian.

Now may some men ask, since that the sea is on that one side, wherefore go they not out on the sea side, for to go where that them liketh?

But to this question, I shall answer; that sea of Caspian goeth out by land under the mountains, and runneth by the desert at one side of the country, and after it stretcheth unto the ends of Persia, and although it be clept a sea, it is no sea, ne it toucheth to none other sea, but it is a lake, the greatest of the world; and though they would put them into that sea, they ne wist never where that they should arrive; and also they can no language but only their own, that no man knoweth but they; and therefore may they not go out.

And also ye shall understand, that the Jews have no proper land of their own for to dwell in, in all the world, but only that land between the mountains. And yet they yield tribute for that land to the Queen of Amazonia, the which that maketh them to be kept in close full diligently, that they shall not go out on no side but by the coast of their land; for their land marcheth to those mountains.

And often it hath befallen, that some of the Jews have gone up the mountains and avaled down to the valleys. But great number of folk ne may not do so, for the mountains be so high and so straight up, that they must abide there, maugre their might. For they may not go out, but by a little issue that was made by strength of men, and it lasteth well a four great mile. p. 176

And after, is there yet a land all desert, where men may find no water, neither for digging ne for none other thing. Wherefore men may not dwell in that place, so is it full of dragons, of serpents and of other venomous beasts, that no man dare not pass, but if it be strong winter. And that strait passage men clepe in that country Clyron. And that is the passage that the Queen of Amazonia maketh to be kept. And though it happen some of them by fortune to go out, they can no manner of language but Hebrew, so that they cannot speak to the people.

And yet, natheles, men say they shall go out in the time of anti-Christ, and that they shall make great slaughter of Christian men. And therefore all the Jews that dwell in all lands learn always to speak Hebrew, in hope, that when the other Jews shall go out, that they may understand their speech, and to lead them into Christendom for to destroy the Christian people. For the Jews say that they know well by their prophecies, that they of Caspia shall go out, and spread throughout all the world, and that the Christian men shall be under their subjection, as long as they have been in subjection of them.

And if that you will wit how that they shall find their way, after that I have heard say I shall tell you.

In the time of anti-Christ a fox shall make there his train, and mine an hole where King Alexander let make the gates; and so long he shall mine and pierce the earth, till that he shall pass through towards that folk. And when they see the fox, they shall have great marvel of him, because that they saw never such a beast. For of all other beasts they have enclosed amongst them, save only the fox. And then they shall chase him and pursue him so strait, till that he come to the same place that he came from. And then they shall dig and mine so strongly, till that they find the gates that King Alexander let make of great stones, and passing huge, well cemented and made strong for the mastery. And those gates they shall break, and so go out by finding of that issue. p. 177

From that land go men toward the land of Bacharia, where be full evil folk and full cruel. In that land be trees that bear wool, as though it were of sheep, whereof men make clothes and all things that may be made of wool.

In that country be many hippotaynes that dwell some-time in the water and sometime on the land. And they be half man and half horse, as I have said before. And they eat men when they may take them.

And there be rivers of waters that be full bitter, three sithes more than is the water of the sea.

In that country be many griffins, more plenty than in any other country. Some men say that they have the body upward as an eagle and beneath as a lion; and truly they say sooth, that they be of that shape. But one griffin hath the body more great and is more strong than eight lions, of such lions as be on this half, and more great and stronger than an hundred eagles such as we have amongst us. For

one griffin there will bear, flying to his nest, a great horse, if he may find him at the point, or two oxen yoked together as they go at the plough. For he hath his talons so long and so large and great upon his feet, as though they were horns of great oxen or of bugles or of kine, so that men make cups of them to drink of. And of their ribs and of the pens of their wings, men make bows, full strong, to shoot with arrows and quarrels.

From thence go men by many journeys through the land of Prester John, the great Emperor of Ind. And men clepe his realm the isle of Pentexoire.

CHAPTER XXX

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Of the Royal Estate of Prester John. And of a rich man that made a marvellous castle and cleped it Paradise; and of his subtlety

This emperor, Prester John, holds full great land, and hath many full noble cities and good towns in his realm, and many great diverse isles and large. For all the country of Ind is devised in isles for the great floods that come from Paradise, that depart all the land in many parts. And also in the sea he hath full many isles. And the best city in the Isle of Pentexoire is Nyse, that is a full royal city and a noble, and full rich.

This Prester John hath under him many kings and many isles and many diverse folk of diverse conditions. And this land is full good and rich, but not so rich as is the land of the great Chan. For the merchants come not thither so commonly for to buy merchandises, as they do in the land of the great Chan, for it is too far to travel to. And on that other part, in the Isle of Cathay, men find all manner thing that is need to man—cloths of gold, of silk, of spicery and all manner avoirdupois. And therefore, albeit that men have greater cheap in the Isle of Prester John, natheles, men dread the long way and the great perils in the sea in those parts.

For in many places of the sea be great rocks of stones of the adamant, that of his proper nature draweth iron to him. And therefore there pass no ships that have either bonds or nails of iron within them. And if there do, anon the rocks of the adamants draw them to them, that never they may go thence. I myself have seen afar in that sea, as though it had been a great isle full of tree, and buscaylle, full of thorns and briars, great plenty. And the shipmen told us, that all that was of ships that were drawn thither by the adamants, for the iron that was in them. And of the rotten-ness, and other thing that was within the ships, grew such buscaylle, and thorns and briars and green grass, and p. 179 such manner of thing; and of the masts and the sail-yards; it seemed a great wood or a grove. And such rocks be in many places thereabout. And therefore dare not the merchants pass there, but if they know well the passages, or else that they have good lodesmen.

And also they dread the long way. And therefore they go to Cathay, for it is more nigh. And yet it is not so nigh, but that men must be travelling by sea and land, eleven months or twelve, from Genoa or from Venice, or he come to Cathay. And yet is the land of Prester John more far by many dreadful journeys.

And the merchants pass by the kingdom of Persia, and go to a city that is Clept Hermes, for Hermes the philosopher founded it. And after that they pass an arm of the sea, and then they go to another city that is clept Golbache. And there they find merchandises, and of popinjays, as great plenty as men find here of geese. And if they will pass further, they may go sikerly enough. In that country is but little wheat or barley, and therefore they eat rice and honey and milk and cheese and fruit.

This Emperor Prester John taketh always to his wife the daughter of the great Chan; and the great Chan also, in the same wise, the daughter of Prester John. For these two be the greatest lords under the firmament.

In the land of Prester John be many diverse things and many precious stones, so great and so large, that men make of them vessels, as platters, dishes and cups. And many other marvels be there, that it

were too cumbrous and too long to put it in scripture of books; but of the principal isles and of his estate and of his law, I shall tell you some part.

This Emperor Prester John is Christian, and a great part of his country also. But yet, they have not all the articles of our faith as we have. They believe well in the Father, in the Son and in the Holy Ghost. And they be full devout and right true one to another. And they set not by no barretts, ne by cautels, nor of no deceits.

And he hath under him seventy-two provinces, and in every province is a king. And these kings have p. 180
kings under them, and all be tributaries to Prester John. And he hath in his lordships many great marvels.

For in his country is the sea that men clepe the Gravelly Sea, that is all gravel and sand, without any drop of water, and it ebbeth and floweth in great waves as other seas do, and it is never still ne in peace, in no manner season. And no man may pass that sea by navy, ne by no manner of craft, and therefore may no man know what land is beyond that sea. And albeit that it have no water, yet men find therein and on the banks full good fish of other manner of kind and shape, than men find in any other sea, and they be of right good taste and delicious to man's meat.

And a three journeys long from that sea be great mountains, out of the which goeth out a great flood that cometh out of Paradise. And it is full of precious stones, without any drop of water, and it runneth through the desert on that one side, so that it maketh the sea gravelly; and it beareth into that sea, and there it endeth. And that flome runneth, also, three days in the week and bringeth with him great stones and the rocks also therewith, and that great plenty. And anon, as they be entered into the Gravelly Sea, they be seen no more, but lost for evermore. And in those three days that that river runneth, no man dare enter into it; but in the other days men dare enter well enough.

Also beyond that flome, more upward to the deserts, is a great plain all gravelly, between the mountains. And in that plain, every day at the sun-rising, begin to grow small trees, and they grow till mid-day, bearing fruit; but no man dare take of that fruit, for it is a thing of faerie. And after mid-day, they decrease and enter again into the earth, so that at the going down of the sun they appear no more. And so they do, every day. And that is a great marvel.

In that desert be many wild men, that be hideous to look on; for they be horned, and they speak nought, but they grunt, as pigs. And there is also great plenty of wild hounds. And there be many p. 181
popinjays, that they clepe psittakes their language. And they speak of their proper nature, and salute men that go through the deserts, and speak to them as apertly as though it were a man. And they that speak well have a large tongue, and have five toes upon a foot. And there be also of another manner, that have but three toes upon a foot, and they speak not, or but little, for they can not but cry.

This Emperor Prester John when he goeth into battle against any other lord, he hath no banners borne before him; but he hath three crosses of gold, fine, great and high, full of precious stones, and every of those crosses be set in a chariot, full richly arrayed. And for to keep every cross, be ordained 10,000 men of arms and more than 100,000 men on foot, in manner as men would keep a standard in our countries, when that we be in land of war. And this number of folk is without the principal host and without wings ordained for the battle. And when he hath no war, but rideth with a privy meinie, then he hath borne before him but one cross of tree, without painting and without gold or silver or precious stones, in remembrance that Jesu Christ suffered death upon a cross of tree. And he hath borne before him also a platter of gold full of earth, in token that his noblesse and his might and his flesh shall turn to earth. And he hath borne before him also a vessel of silver, full of noble jewels of gold full rich and of precious stones, in token of his lordship and of his noblesse and of his might.

He dwelleth commonly in the city of Susa. And there is his principal palace, that is so rich and so noble, that no man will trow it by estimation, but he had seen it. And above the chief tower of the palace be two round pommels of gold, and in everych of them be two carbuncles great and large, that shine full bright upon the night. And the principal gates of his palace be of precious stone that men clepe sardonyx, and the border and the bars be of ivory. And the windows of the halls and chambers be of crystal. And the tables whereon men eat, some be of emeralds, some of amethyst, and some of gold, full of precious stones; and the pillars that bear up the tables be of the same precious stones. p. 182
And the degrees to go up to his throne, where he sitteth at the meat, one is of onyx, another is of crystal, and another of jasper green, another of amethyst, another of sardine, another of cornelian, and

the seventh, that he setteth on his feet, is of chrysolite. And all these degrees be bordered with fine gold, with the tother precious stones, set with great pearls orient. And the sides of the siege of his throne be of emeralds, and bordered with gold full nobly, and dubbed with other precious stones and great pearls. And all the pillars in his chamber be of fine gold with precious stones, and with many carbuncles, that give great light upon the night to all people. And albeit that the carbuncles give light right enough, natheles, at all times burneth a vessel of crystal full of balm, for to give good smell and odour to the emperor, and to void away all wicked airs and corruptions. And the form of his bed is of fine sapphires, bended with gold, for to make him sleep well and to refrain him from lechery; for he will not lie with his wives, but four sithes in the year, after the four seasons, and that is only for to engender children.

He hath also a full fair palace and a noble at the city of Nyse, where that he dwelleth, when him best liketh; but the air is not so attempre, as it is at the city of Susa.

And ye shall understand, that in all his country nor in the countries there all about, men eat not but once in the day, as they do in the court of the great Chan. And so they eat every day in his court, more than 30,000 persons, without goers and comers. But the 30,000 persons of his country, ne of the country of the great Chan, ne spend not so much good as do 12,000 of our country.

This Emperor Prester John hath evermore seven kings with him to serve him, and they depart their service by certain months. And with these kings serve always seventy-two dukes and three hundred and sixty earls. And all the days of the year, there eat in his household and in his court, twelve archbishops and twenty bishops. And the patriarch of Saint Thomas is there as is the pope here. And the archbishops and the bishops and the abbots in that country be all kings. And everych of these p. 183
great lords know well enough the attendance of their service. The one is master of his household, another is his chamberlain, another serveth him of a dish, another of the cup, another is steward, another is marshal, another is prince of his arms, and thus is he full nobly and royally served. And his land dureth in very breadth four month's journeys, and in length out of measure, that is to say, all isles under earth that we suppose to be under us.

Beside the isle of Pentexoire, that is the land of Prester John, is a eat isle, long and broad, that men clepe Mistorak; and it is in the lordship of Prester John. In that isle is great plenty of goods.

There was dwelling, sometime, a rich man; and it is not long since; and men clept him Gatholonabes. And he was full of cautels and of subtle deceits. And he had a full fair castle and a strong in a mountain, so strong and so noble, that no man could devise a fairer ne stronger. And he had let mure all the mountain about with a strong wall and a fair. And within those walls he had the fairest garden that any man might behold. And therein were trees bearing all manner of fruits, that any man could devise. And therein were also all manner virtuous herbs of good smell, and all other herbs also that bear fair flowers. And he had also in that garden many fair wells; and beside those wells he had let make fair halls and fair chambers, depainted all with gold and azure; and there were in that place many diverse things, and many diverse stories: and of beasts, and of birds that sung full delectably and moved by craft, that it seemed that they were quick. And he had also in his garden all manner of fowls and of beasts that any man might think on, for to have play or sport to behold them.

And he had also, in that place, the fairest damsels that might be found, under the age of fifteen years, and the fairest young striplings that men might get, of that same age. And all they were clothed in cloths of gold, full richly. And he said that those were angels.

And he had also let make three wells, fair and noble and all environed with stone of jasper, of crystal, p. 184
diapered with gold, and set with precious stones and great orient pearls. And he had made a conduit under earth, so that the three wells, at his list, one should run milk, another wine and another honey. And that place he clept Paradise.

And when that any good knight, that was hardy and noble, came to see this royalty, he would lead him into his paradise, and show him these wonderful things to his disport, and the marvellous and delicious song of diverse birds, and the fair damsels, and the fair wells of milk, of wine and of honey, plenteously running. And he would let make divers instruments of music to sound in an high tower, so merrily, that it was joy for to hear; and no man should see the craft thereof. And those, he said, were angels of God, and that place was Paradise, that God had behight to his friends, saying, *Dabo vobis terram fluentem lacte et melle*. And then would he make them to drink of certain drink,

whereof anon they should be drunk. And then would them think greater delight than they had before. And then would he say to them, that if they would die for him and for his love, that after their death they should come to his paradise; and they should be of the age of those damosels, and they should play with them, and yet be maidens. And after that yet should he put them in a fairer paradise, where that they should see God of nature visibly, in his majesty and in his bliss. And then would he shew them his intent, and say them, that if they would go slay such a lord, or such a man that was his enemy or contrarious to his list, that they should not dread to do it and for to be slain therefore themselves. For after their death, he would put them into another paradise, that was an hundred-fold fairer than any of the tother; and there should they dwell with the most fairest damosels that might be, and play with them ever-more.

And thus went many diverse lusty bachelors for to slay great lords in diverse countries, that were his enemies, and made themselves to be slain, in hope to have that paradise. And thus, often-time, he was revenged of his enemies by his subtle deceits and false cautels. p. 185

And when the worthy men of the country had perceived this subtle falsehood of this Gatholonabes, they assembled them with force, and assailed his castle, and slew him, and destroyed all the fair places and all the nobilities of that paradise. The place of the wells and of the walls and of many other things be yet apertly seen, but the riches is voided clean. And it is not long gone, since that place was destroyed.

CHAPTER XXXI

Of the Devil's Head in the Valley Perilous. And of the Customs of Folk in diverse Isles that be about in the Lordship of Prester John

Beside that Isle of Mistorak upon the left side nigh to the river of Pison is a marvellous thing. There is a vale between the mountains, that dureth nigh a four mile. And some men clepe it the Vale Enchanted, some clepe it the Vale of Devils, and some clepe it the Vale Perilous. In that vale hear men often-time great tempests and thunders, and great murmurs and noises, all days and nights, and great noise, as it were sound of tabors and of nakers and of trumps, as though it were of a great feast. This vale is all full of devils, and hath been always. And men say there, that it is one of the entries of hell. In that vale is great plenty of gold and silver. Wherefore many misbelieving men, and many Christian men also, go in oftentime for to have of the treasure that there is; but few come again, and namely of the misbelieving men, ne of the Christian men neither, for anon they be strangled of devils.

And in mid place of that vale, under a rock, is an head and the visage of a devil bodily, full horrible and dreadful to see, and it sheweth not but the head, to the shoulders. But there is no man in the world so hardy, Christian man ne other, but that he would be adread to behold it, and that it would seem him to die for dread, so is it hideous for to behold. For he beholdeth every man so sharply with dreadful eyen, that be evermore moving and sparkling as fire, and changeth and stirreth so often in diverse manner, with so horrible countenance, that no man dare not neighen towards him. And from him cometh out smoke and stinking fire and so much abomination, that unnethe no man may there endure. p. 186

But the good Christian men, that be stable in the faith, enter well without peril. For they will first shrive them and mark them with the token of the holy cross, so that the fiends ne have no power over them. But albeit that they be without peril, yet, natheles, ne be they not without dread, when that they see the devils visibly and bodily all about them, that make full many diverse assaults and menaces, in air and in earth, and aghast them with strokes of thunder-blasts and of tempests. And the most dread is, that God will take vengeance then of that that men have misdone against his will.

And ye shall understand, that when my fellows and I were in that vale, we were in great thought, whether that we durst put our bodies in adventure, to go in or not, in the protection of God. And some of our fellows accorded to enter, and some not. So there were with us two worthy men, friars minors, that were of Lombardy, that said, that if any man would enter they would go in with us. And

when they had said so, upon the gracious trust of God and of them, we let sing mass, and made every man to be shriven and houseled. And then we entered fourteen persons; but at our going out we were but nine. And so we wist never, whether that our fellows were lost, or else turned again for dread. But we saw them never after; and those were two men of Greece, and three of Spain. And our other fellows that would not go in with us, they went by another coast to be before us; and so they were.

And thus we passed that perilous vale, and found therein gold and silver, and precious stones and rich jewels, great plenty, both here and there, as us seemed. But whether that it was, as us seemed, I wot never. For I touched none, because that the devils be so subtle to make a thing to seem otherwise than it is, for to deceive mankind. And therefore I touched none, and also because that I would not be put out of my devotion; for I was more devout then, than ever I was before or after, and all for the dread of fiends that I saw in diverse figures, and also for the great multitude of dead bodies, that I saw there lying by the way, by all the vale, as though there had been a battle between two kings, and the mightiest of the country, and that the greater part had been discomfited and slain. And I trow, that unnethe should any country have so much people within him, as lay slain in that vale as us thought, the which was an hideous sight to see. And I marvelled much, that there were so many, and the bodies all whole without rotting. But I trow, that fiends made them seem to be so whole without rotting. But that might not be to mine advice that so many should have entered so newly, ne so many newly slain, with out stinking and rotting. And many of them were in habit of Christian men, but I trow well, that it were of such that went in for covetise of the treasure that was there, and had overmuch feebleness in the faith; so that their hearts ne might not endure in the belief for dread. And therefore were we the more devout a great deal. And yet we were cast down, and beaten down many times to the hard earth by winds and thunders and tempests. But evermore God of his grace holp us. And so we passed that perilous vale without peril and without encumbrance, thanked be Almighty God. p. 187

After this, beyond the vale, is a great isle, where the folk be great giants of twenty-eight foot long, or of thirty foot long. And they have no clothing but of skins of beasts that they hang upon them. And they eat no bread, but all raw flesh; and they drink milk of beasts, for they have plenty of all bestial. And they have no houses to lie in. And they eat more gladly man's flesh than any other flesh. Into that isle dare no man gladly enter. And if they see a ship and men therein, anon they enter into the sea for to take them. p. 188

And men said us, that in an isle beyond that were giants of greater stature, some of forty-five foot, or of fifty foot long, and, as some men say, some of fifty cubits long. But I saw none of those, for I had no lust to go to those parts, because that no man cometh neither into that isle ne into the other, but if he be devoured anon. And among those giants be sheep as great as oxen here, and they bear great wool and rough. Of the sheep I have seen many times. And men have seen, many times, those giants take men in the sea out of their ships, and brought them to land, two in one hand and two in another, eating them going, all raw and all quick.

Another isle is there toward the north, in the sea Ocean, where that be full cruel and full evil women of nature. And they have precious stones in their eyen. And they be of that kind, that if they behold any man with wrath, they slay him anon with the beholding, as doth the basilisk.

Another isle is there, full fair and good and great, and full of people, where the custom is such, that the first night that they be married, they make another man to lie by their wives for to have their maidenhead: and therefore they take great hire and great thank. And there be certain men in every town that serve of none other thing; and they clepe them cadeberiz, that is to say, the fools of wanhope. For they of the country hold it so great a thing and so perilous for to have the maidenhead of a woman, that them seemeth that they that have first the maidenhead putteth him in adventure of his life. And if the husband find his wife maiden that other next night after that she should have been lain by of the man that is assigned therefore, peradventure for drunkenness or for some other cause, the husband shall plain upon him that he hath not done his devoir, in such cruel wise as though the officers would have slain him. But after the first night that they be lain by, they keep them so straitly that they be not so hardy to speak with no man. And I asked them the cause why that they held such custom: and they said me, that of old time men had been dead for deflowering of maidens, that had serpents in their bodies that stung men upon their yards, that they died anon: and therefore they held that customs to make other men ordained therefore to lie by their wives, for dread of death, and to assay the passage by another [rather] than for to put them in that adventure. p. 189

After that is another isle where that women make great sorrow when their children be y-born. And when they die, they make great feast and great joy and revel, and then they cast them into a great fire burning. And those that love well their husbands, if their husbands be dead, they cast them also in the fire with their children, and burn them. And they say that the fire shall cleanse them of all filths and of all vices, and they shall go pured and clean into another world to their husbands, and they shall lead their children with them. And the cause why that they weep, when their children be born is this; for when they come into this world, they come to labour, sorrow and heaviness. And why they make joy and gladness at their dying is because that, as they say, then they go to Paradise where the rivers run milk and honey, where that men see them in joy and in abundance of goods, without sorrow and labour.

In that isle men make their king evermore by election, and they ne choose him not for no noblesse nor for no riches, but such one as is of good manners and of good conditions, and therewithal rightfull, and also that he be of great age, and that he have no children. In that isle men be full rightfull and they do rightfull judgments in every cause both of rich and poor, small and great, after the quantity of the trespass that is mis-done. And the king may not doom no man to death without assent of his barons and other men wise of counsel, and that all the court accord thereto. And if the king himself do any homicide or any crime, as to slay a man, or any such case, he shall die there for. But he shall not be slain as another man; but men shall defend, in pain of death, that no man be so hardy to make him company ne to speak with him, ne that no man give him, ne sell him, ne serve p. 190
him, neither of meat ne of drink; and so shall he die in mischief. They spare no man that hath trespassed, neither for love, ne for favour ne for riches, ne for noblesse; but that he shall have after that he hath done.

Beyond that isle is another isle, where is great multitude of folk. And they will not, for no thing, eat flesh of hares, ne of hens, ne of geese; and yet they bring forth enough, for to see them and to behold them only; but they eat flesh of all other beasts, and drink milk. In that country they take their daughters and their sisters to their wives, and their other kinswomen. And if there be ten men or twelve men or more dwelling in an house, the wife of everych of them shall be common to them all that dwell in that house; so that every man may lie with whom he will of them on one night, and with another, another night. And if she have any child, she may give it to what man that she list, that hath companied with her, so that no man knoweth there whether the child be his or another's. And if any man say to them, that they nourish other men's children, they answer that so do over men theirs.

In that country and by all Ind be great plenty of cockodrills, that is a manner of a long serpent, as I have said before. And in the night they dwell in the water, and on the day upon the land, in rocks and in caves. And they eat no meat in all the winter, but they lie as in a dream, as do the serpents. These serpents slay men, and they eat them weeping; and when they eat they move the over jaw, and not the nether jaw, and they have no tongue.

In that country and in many other beyond that, and also in many on this half, men put in work the seed of cotton, and they sow it every year. And then groweth it in small trees, that bear cotton. And so do men every year, so that there is plenty of cotton at all times. Item; in this isle and in many other, there is a manner of wood, hard and strong. Whoso covereth the coals of that wood under the ashes thereof, the coals will dwell and abide all quick, a year or more. And that tree hath many p. 191
leaves, as the juniper hath. And there be also many trees, that of nature they will never burn, ne rot in no manner. And there be nut trees, that bear nuts as great as a man's head.

There also be many beasts, that be clept orafles. In Arabia, they be clept gerfaunts. That is a beast, pomely or spotted, that is but a little more high than is a steed, but he hath the neck a twenty cubits long; and his croup and his tail is as of an hart; and he may look over a great high house. And there be also in that country many camles; that is a little beast as a goat, that is wild, and he liveth by the air and eateth nought, ne drinketh nought, at no time. And he changeth his colour often-time, for men see him often sithes, now in one colour and now in another colour; and he may change him into all manner colours that him list, save only into red and white. There be also in that country passing great serpents, some of six score foot long, and they be of diverse colours, as rayed, red, green, and yellow, blue and black, and all speckled. And there be others that have crests upon their heads, and they go upon their feet, upright, and they be well a four fathom great, or more, and they dwell always in rocks or in mountains, and they have alway the throat open, of whence they drop venom always. And there be also wild swine of many colours, as great as be oxen in our country, and they be all spotted, as be

young fawns. And there be also urchins, as great as wild swine here; we clepe them Porcz de Spine. And there be lions all white, great and mighty. And there be also of other beasts, as great and more greater than is a destrier, and men clepe them Loerancs; and some men clepe them odenthos; and they have a black head and three long horns trenchant in the front, sharp as a sword, and the body is slender; and he is a full felonious beast, and he chaseth and slayeth the elephant. There be also many other beasts, full wicked and cruel, that be not mickle more than a bear, and they have the head like a boar, and they have six feet, and on every foot two large claws, trenchant; and the body is like a bear, and the tail as a lion. And there be also mice as great as hounds, and yellow mice as great as ravens. p. 192
And there be geese, all red, three sithes more great than ours here, and they have the head, the neck and the breast all black.

And many other diverse beasts be in those countries, and elsewhere there-about, and many diverse birds also, of the which it were too long for to tell you. And therefore, I pass over at this time.

CHAPTER XXXII

Of the goodness of the folk of the Isle of Bragman. Of King Alexander. And wherefore the Emperor of Ind is clept Prester John

And beyond that isle is another isle, great and good and plenteous, where that be good folk and true, and of good living after their belief and of good faith. And albeit that they be not christened, ne have no perfect law, yet, natheles, of kindly law they be full of all virtue, and they eschew all vices and all malices and all sins. For they be not proud, ne covetous, ne envious, ne wrathful, ne gluttons, ne lecherous. Ne they do to any man otherwise than they would that other men did to them, and in this point they fulfil the ten commandments of God, and give no charge of avoir, ne of riches. And they lie not, ne they swear not for none occasion, but they say simply, yea and nay; for they say, he that sweareth will deceive his neighbour, and therefore, all that they do, they do it without oath.

And men clepe that isle the Isle of Bragman, and some men clepe it the Land of Faith. And through that land runneth a great river that is clept Thebe. And, in general, all the men of those isles and of all the marches thereabout be more true than in any other countries thereabout, and more rightfull than others in all things. In that isle is no thief, ne murderer, ne common woman, ne poor beggar, ne never p. 193
was man slain in that country. And they be so chaste, and lead so good life, as that they were religious men, and they fast all days. And because they be so true and so rightfull, and so full of all good conditions, they were never grieved with tempests, ne with thunder, ne with light, ne with hail, ne with pestilence, ne with war, ne with hunger, ne with none other tribulation, as we be, many times, amongst us, for our sins. Wherefore, it seemeth well, that God loveth them and is pleased with their creaunce for their good deeds. They believe well in God, that made all things, and him they worship. And they prize none earthly riches; and so they be all rightfull. And they live full ordinately, and so soberly in meat and drink, that they live right long. And the most part of them die without sickness, when nature faileth them, for eld.

And it befell in King Alexander's time, that he purposed him to conquer that isle and to make them to hold of him. And when they of the country heard it, they sent messengers to him with letters, that said thus; What may be enough to that man to whom all the world is insufficient? Thou shalt find nothing in us, that may cause thee to war against us. For we have no riches, ne none we covet, and all the goods of our country be in common. Our meat, that we sustain withal our bodies, is our riches. And, instead of treasure of gold and silver, we make our treasure of accord and peace, and for to love every man other. And for to apparel with our bodies we use a silly little clout for to wrap in our carrion. Our wives ne be not arrayed for to make no man pleasance, but only convenable array for to eschew folly. When men pain them to array the body for to make it seem fairer than God made it, they do great sin. For man should not devise ne ask greater beauty, than God hath ordained man to be at his birth. The earth ministereth to us two things,—our livelihood, that cometh of the earth that we live by, and our sepulture after our death. We have been in perpetual peace till now, that thou come to disinherit us. And also we have a king, not only for to do justice to every man, for he shall p. 194
find no forfeit among us; but for to keep noblesse, and for to shew that we be obeissant, we have a

king. For justice ne hath not among us no place, for we do to no man otherwise than we desire that men do to us. So that righteousness ne vengeance have nought to do among us. So that nothing thou may take from us, but our good peace, that always hath dured among us.

And when King Alexander had read these letters, he thought that he should do great sin, for to trouble them. And then he sent them sureties, that they should not be afeard of him, and that they should keep their good manners and their good peace, as they had used before, of custom. And so he let them alone.

Another isle there is, that men clepe Oxidrate, and another isle, that men clepe Gynosophe, where there is also good folk, and full of good faith. And they hold, for the most part, the good conditions and customs and good manners, as men of the country abovesaid; but they go all naked.

Into that isle entered King Alexander, to see the manner. And when he saw their great faith, and their truth that was amongst them, he said that he would not grieve them, and bade them ask of him what that they would have of him, riches or anything else, and they should have it, with good will. And they answered, that he was rich enough that had meat and drink to sustain the body with, for the riches of this world, that is transitory, is not worth; but if it were in his power to make them immortal, thereof would they pray him, and thank him. And Alexander answered them that it was not in his power to do it, because he was mortal, as they were. And then they asked him why he was so proud and so fierce, and so busy for to put all the world under his subjection, right as thou were a God, and hast no term of this life, neither day ne hour, and willest to have all the world at thy commandment, that shall leave thee without fail, or thou leave it. And right as it hath been to other men before thee, right so it shall be to other after thee. And from hence shalt thou bear nothing; but as thou were born p. 195
naked, right so all naked shall thy body be turned into earth that thou were made of. Wherefore thou shouldest think and impress it in thy mind, that nothing is immortal, but only God, that made the thing. By the which answer Alexander was greatly astonished and abashed, and all confused and departed from them.

And albeit that these folk have not the articles of our faith as we have, natheles, for their good faith natural, and for their good intent, I trow fully, that God loveth them, and that God take their service to gree, right as he did of Job, that was a paynim, and held him for his true servant. And therefore, albeit that there be many diverse laws in the world, yet I trow, that God loveth always them that love him, and serve him meekly in truth, and namely them that despise the vain glory of this world, as this folk do and as Job did also.

And therefore said our Lord by the mouth of Hosea the prophet, *Ponam eis multiplices leges meas*; and also in another place, *Qui totum orbem subdit suis legibus*. And also our Lord saith in the Gospel, *Alias oves habeo*, *que non sunt ex hoc ovili*, that is to say, that he had other servants than those that be under Christian law. And to that accordeth the avision that Saint Peter saw at Jaffa, how the angel came from heaven, and brought before him diverse beasts, as serpents and other creeping beasts of the earth, and of other also, great plenty, and bade him take and eat. And Saint Peter answered; I eat never, quoth he, of unclean beasts. And then said the angel, *Non dicas immunda*, *que Deus mundavit*. And that was in token that no man should have in despite none earthly man for their diverse laws, for we know not whom God loveth, ne whom God hateth. And for that example, when men say, *De profundis*, they say it in common and in general, with the Christian, *Pro animabus omnium defunctorum*, *pro quibus sit orandum*.

And therefore say I of this folk, that be so true and so faithful, that God loveth them. For he hath amongst them many of the prophets, and alway hath had. And in those isles, they prophesied the p. 196
Incarnation of Lord Jesu Christ, how he should be born of a maiden, three thousand year or more or our Lord was born of the Virgin Mary. And they believe well it, the Incarnation, and that full perfectly, but they know not the manner, how he suffered his passion and death for us.

And beyond these isles there is another isle that is clept Pytan. The folk of that country ne till not, ne labour not the earth, for they eat no manner thing. And they be of good colour and of fair shape, after their greatness. But the small be as dwarfs, but not so little as be the Pigmies. These men live by the smell of wild apples. And when they go any far way, they bear the apples with them; for if they had lost the savour of the apples, they should die anon. They ne be not full reasonable, but they be simple and bestial.

After that is another isle, where the folk be all skinned rough hair, as a rough beast, save only the face and the palm of the hand. These folk go as well under the water of the sea, as they do above the land all dry. And they eat both flesh and fish all raw. In this isle is a great river that is well a two mile and an half of breadth that is clept Beaumare.

And from that river a fifteen journeys in length, going by the deserts of the tother side of the river—whoso might go it, for I was not there, but it was told us of them of the country, that within those deserts were the trees of the sun and of the moon, that spake to King Alexander, and warned him of his death. And men say that the folk that keep those trees, and eat of the fruit and of the balm that groweth there, live well four hundred year or five hundred year, by virtue of the fruit and of the balm. For men say that balm groweth there in great plenty and nowhere else, save only at Babylon, as I have told you before. We would have gone toward the trees full gladly if we had might. But I trow that 100,000 men of arms might not pass those deserts safely, for the great multitude of wild beasts and of great dragons and of great serpents that there be, that slay and devour all that come p. 197
anent them. In that country be many white elephants without number, and of unicorns and of lions of many manners, and many of such beasts that I have told before, and of many other hideous beasts without number.

Many other isles there be in the land of Prester John, and many great marvels, that were too long to tell all, both of his riches and of his noblesse and of the great plenty also of precious stones that he hath. I trow that ye know well enough, and have heard say, wherefore this emperor is clept Prester John. But, natheles, for them that know not, I shall say you the cause.

It was sometime an emperor there, that was a worthy and a full noble prince, that had Christian knights in his company, as he hath that is now. So it befell, that he had great list for to see the service in the church among Christian men. And then dured Christendom beyond the sea, all Turkey, Syria, Tartary, Jerusalem, Palestine, Arabia, Aleppo and all the land of Egypt. And so it befell that this emperor came with a Christian knight with him into a church in Egypt. And it was the Saturday in Whitsun-week. And the bishop made orders. And he beheld, and listened the service full tentively. And he asked the Christian knight what men of degree they should be that the prelate had before him. And the knight answered and said that they should be priests. And then the emperor said that he would no longer be clept king ne emperor, but priest, and that he would have the name of the first priest that went out of the church, and his name was John. And so ever-more sithens, he is clept Prester John.

In his land be many Christian men of good faith and of good law, and namely of them of the same country, and have commonly their priests, that sing the Mass, and make the sacrament of the altar, of bread, right as the Greeks do; but they say not so many things at the Mass as men do here. For they say not but only that that the apostles said, as our Lord taught them, right as Saint Peter and Saint Thomas and the other apostles sung the Mass, saying the *Pater Noster* and the words of the p. 198
sacrament. But we have many more additions that divers popes have made, that they ne know not of.

CHAPTER XXXIII

Of the Hills of Gold that Pismires keep. And of the four Floods that come from Paradise Terrestrial

Toward the east part of Prester John's land is an isle good and great, that men clepe Taprobane, that is full noble and full fructuous. And the king thereof is full rich, and is under the obeissance of Prester John. And always there they make their king by election. In that isle be two summers and two winters, and men harvest the corn twice a year. And in all the seasons of the year be the gardens flourished. There dwell good folk and reasonable, and many Christian men amongst them, that be so rich that they wit not what to do with their goods. Of old time, when men passed from the land of Prester John unto that isle, men made ordinance for to pass by ship, twenty-three days, or more; but now men pass by ship in seven days. And men may see the bottom of the sea in many places, for it is not full deep.

Beside that isle, toward the east, be two other isles. And men clepe that one Orille, and that other Argyte, of the which all the land is mine of gold and silver. And those isles be right where that the Red Sea departeth from the sea ocean. And in those isles men see there no stars so clearly as in other places. For there appear no stars, but only one clear star that men clepe Canapos. And there is not the moon seen in all the lunation, save only the second quarter.

In the isle also of this Taprobane be great hills of gold, that pismires keep full diligently. And they fine the pured gold, and cast away the un-pured. And these pismires be great as hounds, so that no p. 199
man dare come to those hills for the pismires would assail them and devour them anon. So that no man may get of that gold, but by great sleight. And therefore when it is great heat, the pismires rest them in the earth, from prime of the day into noon. And then the folk of the country take camels, dromedaries, and horses and other beasts, and go thither, and charge them in all haste that they may; and after that, they flee away in all haste that the beasts may go, or the pismires come out of the earth. And in other times, when it is not so hot, and that the pismires ne rest them not in the earth, then they get gold by this subtlety. They take mares that have young colts or foals, and lay upon the mares void vessels made there-for; and they be all open above, and hanging low to the earth. And then they send forth those mares for to pasture about those hills, and with-hold the foals with them at home. And when the pismires see those vessels, they leap in anon: and they have this kind that they let nothing be empty among them, but anon they fill it, be it what manner of thing that it be; and so they fill those vessels with gold. And when that the folk suppose that the vessels be full, they put forth anon the young foals, and make them to neigh after their dams. And then anon the mares return towards their foals with their charges of gold. And then men discharges them, and get gold enough by this subtlety. For the pismires will suffer beasts to go and pasture amongst them, but no man in no wise.

And beyond the land and the isles and the deserts of Prester John's lordship, in going straight toward the east, men find nothing but mountains and rocks, full great. And there is the dark region, where no man may see, neither by day ne by night, as they of the country say. And that desert and that place of darkness dure from this coast unto Paradise terrestrial, where that Adam, our formest father, and Eve were put, that dwelled there but little while: and that is towards the east at the beginning of the earth. But that is not that east that we clepe our east, on this half, where the sun riseth to us. For when the p. 200
sun is east in those parts towards Paradise terrestrial, it is then midnight in our parts on this half, for the roundness of the earth, of the which I have touched to you of before. For our Lord God made the earth all round in the mid place of the firmament. And there as mountains and hills be and valleys, that is not but only of Noah's flood, that wasted the soft ground and the tender, and fell down into valleys, and the hard earth and the rocks abide mountains, when the soft earth and tender waxed nesh through the water, and fell and became valleys.

Of Paradise ne can I not speak properly. For I was not there. It is far beyond. And that forthinketh me. And also I was not worthy. But as I have heard say of wise men beyond, I shall tell you with good will.

Paradise terrestrial, as wise men say, is the highest place of earth, that is in all the world. And it is so high that it toucheth nigh to the circle of the moon, there as the moon maketh her turn; for she is so high that the flood of Noah ne might not come to her, that would have covered all the earth of the world all about and above and beneath, save Paradise only alone. And this Paradise is enclosed all about with a wall, and men wit not whereof it is; for the walls be covered all over with moss, as it seemeth. And it seemeth not that the wall is stone of nature, ne of none other thing that the wall is. And that wall stretcheth from the south to the north, and it hath not but one entry that is closed with fire, burning; so that no man that is mortal ne dare not enter.

And in the most high place of Paradise, even in the middle place, is a well that casteth out the four floods that run by divers lands. Of the which, the first is clept Pison, or Ganges, that is all one; and it runneth throughout Ind or Emlak, in the which river be many precious stones, and much of lignum aloes and much gravel of gold. And that other river is clept Nilus or Gison, that goeth by Ethiopia and after by Egypt. And that other is clept Tigris, that runneth by Assyria and by Armenia the great. And that other is clept Euphrates, that runneth also by Media and Armenia and by Persia. And men there beyond say, that all the sweet waters of the world, above and beneath, take their beginning of p. 201
the well of Paradise, and out of that well all waters come and go.

The first river is clept Pison, that is to say in their language Assembly; for many other rivers meet them there, and go into that river. And some men clepe it Ganges, for a king that was in Ind, that hight Gangeres, and that it ran throughout his land. And that water [is] in some place clear, and in some place troubled, in some place hot, and in some place cold.

The second river is clept Nilus or Gison; for it is always trouble; and Gison, in the language of Ethiopia, is to say, trouble, and in the language of Egypt also.

The third river, that is dept Tigris, is as much for to say as, fast-running; for he runneth more fast than any of the tother; and also there is a beast, that is clept tigris, that is fast-running.

The fourth river is clept Euphrates, that is to say, well-bearing; for there grow many goods upon that river, as corns, fruits and other goods enough plenty.

And ye shall understand that no man that is mortal ne may not approach to that Paradise. For by land no man may go for wild beasts that be in the deserts, and for the high mountains and great huge rocks that no man may pass by, for the dark places that be there, and that many. And by the rivers may no man go. For the water runneth so rudely and so sharply, because that it cometh down so outrageously from the high places above, that it runneth in so great waves, that no ship may not row ne sail against it. And the water roareth so, and maketh so huge noise and so great tempest, that no man may hear other in the ship, though he cried with all the craft that he could in the highest voice that he might. Many great lords have assayed with great will, many times, for to pass by those rivers towards Paradise, with full great companies. But they might not speed in their voyage. And many died for weariness of rowing against those strong waves. And many of them became blind, and many deaf, for the noise of the water. And some were perished and lost within the waves. So that no mortal man p. 202
may approach to that place, without special grace of God, so that of that place I can say you no more; and therefore, I shall hold me still, and return to that, that I have seen.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Of the Customs of Kings and other that dwell in the Isles coasting to Prester John's Land. And of the Worship that the Son doth to the Father when he is dead

From those isles that I have spoken of before, in the Land of Prester John, that be under earth as to us that be on this half, and of other isles that be more further beyond, whoso will, pursue them for to come again right to the parts that he came from, and so environ all earth. But what for the isles, what for the sea, and what for strong rowing, few folk assay for to pass that passage; albeit that men might do it well, that might be of power to dress them thereto, as I have said you before. And therefore men return from those isles abovesaid by other isles, coasting from the land of Prester John.

And then come men in returning to an isle that is clept Casson. And that isle hath well sixty journeys in length, and more than fifty in breadth. This is the best isle and the best kingdom that is in all those parts, out-taken Cathay. And if the merchants used as much that country as they do Cathay, it would be better than Cathay in a short while. This country is full well inhabited, and so full of cities and of good towns inhabited with people, that when a man goeth out of one city, men see another city even before them; and that is what part that a man go, in all that country. In that isle is great plenty of all goods for to live with, and of all manner of spices. And there be great forests of chestnuts. The king of that isle is full rich and full mighty, and, natheles, he holds his land of the great Chan, and is p. 203
obeissant to him. For it is one of the twelve provinces that the great Chan hath under him without his proper land, and without other less isles that he hath; for he hath full many.

From that kingdom come men, in returning, to another isle that is clept Rybothe, and it is also under the great Chan. That is a full good country, and full plenteous of all goods and of wines and fruit and all other riches. And the folk of that country have no houses, but they dwell and lie all under tents made of black fern, by all the country. And the principal city and the most royal is all walled with black stone and white. And all the streets also be pathed of the same stones. In that city is no man so hardy to shed blood of any man, ne of no beast, for the reverence of an idol that is worshipped there.

And in that isle dwelleth the pope of their law, that they clepe Lobassy. This Lobassy giveth all the benefices, and all other dignities and all other things that belong to the idol. And all those that hold anything of their churches, religious and other, obey to him, as men do here to the Pope of Rome.

In that isle they have a custom by all the country, that when the father is dead of any man, and the son list to do great worship to his father, he sendeth to all his friends and to all his kin, and for religious men and priests, and for minstrels also, great plenty. And then men bear the dead body unto a great hill with great joy and solemnity. And when they have brought it thither, the chief prelate smiteth off the head, and layeth it upon a great platter of gold and of silver, if so [he] be a rich man. And then he taketh the head to the son. And then the son and his other kin sing and say many orisons. And then the priests and the religious men smite all the body of the dead man in pieces. And then they say certain orisons. And the fowls of ravine of all the country about know the custom of long time before, [and] come flying above in the air; as eagles, gledes, ravens and other fowls of ravine, that eat flesh. And then the priests cast the gobbets of the flesh and then the fowls, each of them, taketh that p. 204
he may, and goeth a little thence and eateth it; and so they do whilst any piece lasteth of the dead body.

And after that, as priests amongst us sing for the dead, *Subvenite Sancti Dei*, *etc.*, right so the priests sing with high voice in their language; Behold how so worthy a man and how good a man this was, that the angels of God come for to seek him and for to bring him into Paradise. And then seemeth it to the son, that he is highly worshipped, when that many birds and fowls and ravens come and eat his father; and he that hath most number of fowls is most worshipped.

And then the son bringeth home with him all his kin, and his friends, and all the others to his house, and maketh them a great feast. And then all his friends make their vaunt and their dalliance, how the fowls came thither, here five, here six, here ten, and there twenty, and so forth; and they rejoice them hugely for to speak thereof. And when they be at meat, the son let bring forth the head of his father, and thereof he giveth of the flesh to his most special friends, instead of *entre messe*, or a *sukkarke*. And of the brain pan, he letteth make a cup, and thereof drinketh he and his other friends also, with great devotion, in remembrance of the holy man, that the angels of God have eaten. And that cup the son shall keep to drink of all his life-time, in remembrance of his father.

From that land, in returning by ten journeys throughout the land of the great Chan, is another good isle and a great kingdom, where the king is full rich and mighty.

And amongst the rich men of his country is a passing rich man, that is no prince, ne duke, ne earl, but he hath more that hold of him lands and other lordships, for he is more rich. For he hath, every year, of annual rent 300,000 horses charged with corn of diverse grains and of rice. And so he leadeth a full noble life and a delicate, after the custom of the country. For he hath, every day, fifty fair damosels, all maidens, that serve him evermore at his meat, and for to lie by him o' night, and for to do with them that is to his pleasance. And when he is at table, they bring him his meat at every time, p. 205
five and five together; and in bringing their service they sing a song. And after that, they cut his meat, and put it in his mouth; for he toucheth nothing, ne handleth nought, but holdeth evermore his hands before him upon the table. For he hath so long nails, that he may take nothing, ne handle nothing. For the noblesse of that country is to have long nails, and to make them grow always to be as long as men may. And there be many in that country, that have their nails so long, that they environ all the hand. And that is a great noblesse. And the noblesse of the women is for to have small feet and little. And therefore anon as they be born, they let bind their feet so strait, that they may not grow half as nature would. And this is the noblesse of the women there to have small feet and little. And always these damosels, that I spake of before, sing all the time that this rich man eateth. And when that he eateth no more of his first course, then other five and five of fair damsels bring him his second course, always singing as they did before. And so they do continually every day to the end of his meat. And in this manner he leadeth his life. And so did they before him, that were his ancestors. And so shall they that come after him, without doing of any deeds of arms, but live evermore thus in ease, as a. swine that is fed in sty for to be made fat. He hath a full fair palace and full rich, where that he dwelleth in, of the which the walls be, in circuit, two mile. And he hath within many fair gardens, and many fair halls and chambers; and the pavement of his halls and chambers be of gold and silver. And in the mid place of one of his gardens is a little mountain, where there is a little meadow. And in that meadow is a little toothill with towers and pinnacles, all of gold.

And in that little toothill will he sit often-time, for to take the air and to disport him. For the place is made for nothing else, but only for his disport.

From that country men come by the land of the great Chan also, that I have spoken of before.

And ye shall understand, that of all these countries, and of all these isles, and of all the diverse folk, p. 206
that I have spoken of before, and of diverse laws, and of diverse beliefs that they have, yet is there none of them all but that they have some reason within them and understanding, but if it be the fewer, and that have certain articles of our faith and some good points of our belief, and that they believe in God, that formed all things and made the world, and clepe him God of Nature; after that the prophet saith, *Et metuent eum omnes fines terrae*, and also in another place, *Omnes gentes servient ei*, that is to say, 'All folk shall serve him.'

But yet they cannot speak perfectly (for there is no man to teach them), but only that they can devise by their natural wit. For they have no knowledge of the Son, ne of the Holy Ghost. But they can all speak of the Bible, and namely of Genesis, of the prophet's saws and of the books of Moses. And they say well, that the creatures that † they worship ne be no gods; but they worship them for the virtue that is in them, that may not be but only by the grace of God. And of simulacres and of idols, they say, that there be no folk, but that they have simulacres. And that they say, for we Christian men have images, as of our Lady and of other saints that we worship; not the images of tree or of stone, but the saints, in whose name they be made after. For right as the books and the scripture of them teach the clerks how and in what manner they shall believe, right so the images and the paintings teach the lewd folk to worship the saints and to have them in their mind, in whose names that the images be made after. They say also, that the angels of God speak to them in those idols, and that they do many great miracles. And they say sooth, that there is an angel within them. For there be two manner of angels, a good and an evil, as the Greeks say, Cacho and Calo. This Cacho is the wicked angel, and Calo is the good angel. But the tother is not the good angel, but the wicked angel that is within the idols to deceive them and for to maintain them in their error.

There be many other divers countries and many other marvels beyond, that I have not seen. p. 207
Wherefore, of them I cannot speak properly to tell you the manner of them. And also in the countries where I have been, be many more diversities of many wonderful things than I make mention of; for it were too long thing to devise you the manner. And therefore, that that I have devised you of certain countries, that I have spoken of before, I beseech your worthy and excellent noblesse, that it suffice to you at this time. For if that I devised you all that is beyond the sea, another man, peradventure, that would pain him and travail his body for to go into those marches for to ensearch those countries, might be blamed by my words in rehearsing many strange things; for he might not say nothing of new, in the which the hearers might have either solace, or disport, or lust, or liking in the hearing. For men say always, that new things and new tidings be pleasant to hear. Wherefore I will hold me still, without any more rehearsing of diversities or of marvels that be beyond, to that intent and end, that whoso will go into those countries, he shall find enough to speak of, that I have not touched of in no wise.

And ye shall understand, if it like you, that at mine home-coming, I came to Rome, and shewed my life to our holy father the pope, and was assoiled of all that lay in my conscience, of many a diverse grievous point; as men must needs that be in company, dwelling amongst so many a diverse folk of diverse sect and of belief, as I have been.

And amongst all I shewed him this treatise, that I had made after information of men that knew of things that I had not seen myself, and also of marvels and customs that I had seen myself, as far as God would give me grace; and besought his holy fatherhood, that my book might be examined and corrected by advice of his wise and discreet council. And our holy father, of his special grace, remitted my book to be examined and proved by the advice of his said counsel. By the which my book was proved for true, insomuch, that they shewed me a book, that my book was examined by, p. 208
that comprehended full much more, by an hundred part, by the which the *Mappa Mundi* was made after. And so my book (albeit that many men ne list not to give credence to nothing, but to that that they see with their eye, ne be the author ne the person never so true) is affirmed and proved by our holy father, in manner and form as I have said.

And I, John Mandevile, knight, abovesaid (although I be unworthy), that departed from our countries and passed the sea, the year of grace a thousand three hundred and twenty two, that have passed

many lands and many isles and countries, and searched many full strange places, and have been in many a full good honourable company, and at many a fair deed of arms (albeit that I did none myself, for mine unable insuffisance), now I am come home, maugre myself, to rest, for gouts artetykes that me distrain, that define the end of my labour; against my will (God knoweth).

And thus, taking solace in my wretched rest, recording the time passed, I have fulfilled these things, and put them written in this book, as it would come into my mind, the year of grace a thousand three hundred and fifty six, in the thirty-fourth year, that I departed from our countries.

Wherefore, I pray to all the readers and hearers of this book, if it please them, that they would pray to God for me; and I shall pray for them. And all those that say for me a *Pater Noster*, with an *Ave Maria*, that God forgive me my sins, I make them partners, and grant them part of all the good pilgrimages and of all the good deeds that I have done, if any be to his pleasance; and not only of those, but of all that ever I shall do unto my life's end. And I beseech Almighty God, from whom all goodness and grace cometh from, that he vouchsafe of his excellent mercy and abundant grace, to fulfil their souls with inspiration of the Holy Ghost, in making defence of all their ghostly enemies here in earth, to their salvation both of body and soul; to worship and thanking of him, that is three and one, without beginning and without ending; that is without quality, good, without quantity, great; that in all places is present, and all things containing; the which that no goodness may amend, ne none evil impair; that in perfect Trinity liveth and reigneth God, by all worlds, and by all times! p. 209

Amen! *Amen*! *Amen*!

[Here Endeth the Book of John Mandeville.]

FOOTNOTES

[0] The supplement was not transcribed as part of the original Project Gutenberg release. The texts are available elsewhere in Project Gutenberg.—DP.

[ix] Not Mandeville, but an anonymous sojourner among the Tartars, whose story fills a page and a half in Hakluyt.

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